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nintendo Wi-Fi connection

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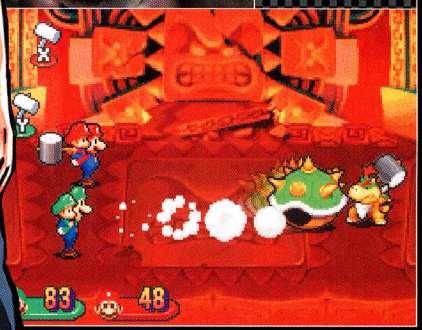

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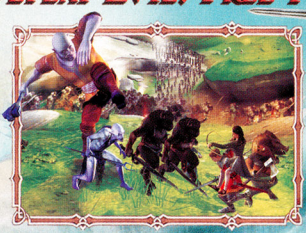

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NINTENDO POWER

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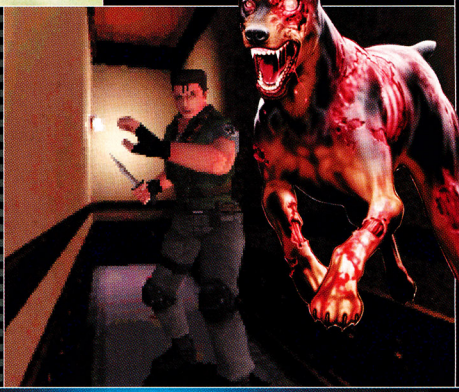

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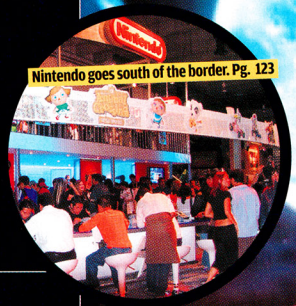

Nintendo goes south of the border. Pg. 123

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Pulse

WHY-FI?

Wi-Fi isn't a big deal. It's mainstream technology. But the way Nintendo is using Wi-Fi to make the best-connected multiplayer gaming experiences ever is a *huge* deal. Never before have so many millions of gamers had easy access to great multiplayer gaming experiences, and the Nintendo DS Wi-Fi games, services and features you'll learn about in this issue are just the beginning; Nintendo Revolution will connect gamers in the same way. While you've been going about your business, your tireless NP staff members have been helping test the Nintendo Wi-Fi Connection by kart-racing against players in Japan and Europe, competing with Vicarious Visions' Tony Hawk development team head-to-head and rampaging through each other's villages in Animal Crossing. What we've learned is that the Nintendo Wi-Fi Connection is about forming a community of gamers. Whereas once we played alone or with a few select buddies, we can now challenge the world, meet new people, make new friends and kick new butts. And unlike the other guys, Nintendo isn't going to bleed your bank account every month just so you can experience what you already paid for when you bought the game. The rules have changed, and Nintendo Power has the full story, with insights about the Nintendo Wi-Fi Connection, strategies to maximize your winning potential in Mario Kart DS and Tony Hawk's American Sk8land and an in-depth look at the community-in-the-making called Animal Crossing: Wild World. We've even included a tear-out easy-setup guide. The next time you're in a Wi-Fi-connected McDonald's chowing down between rounds of Kart, grab extra napkins to keep your DS's touch screen clean.

Scott Pelland
Managing Editor

LETTERS

RPG FAQ

I have two pressing questions that all of us die-hard RPG gamers have been wondering about for years. 1) Will there ever be a sequel to Skies of Arcadia? 2) For the love of all that is good, where is our remake of Final Fantasy VI (and not that PSX monstrosity)? It has been 10 long years!

Griffon M.
via the Internet

Never say never, but given the underwhelming sales of the first one, a Skies of Arcadia sequel seems unlikely. Which is too bad; Skies is one of the most underrated RPGs of this generation. We've got better news regarding your second question. Following the announcement of Final Fantasy IV for the GBA, Square Enix recently revealed that parts V and VI would be heading to the handheld as well. No word yet on a North American release, but we'll eat our hats if both games don't make it here eventually.

WE DEAL IN BULK

I have finally decided to admit I like the new magazine. At first, I was extremely disappointed that you got rid of my beloved Power On. But after reading the last few editions of Pulse, you have convinced me to renew my subscription with your priceless humor.

Boaz N.
via the Internet

No, Walker, Texas Ranger *is priceless. At $20 a year, our humor is actually quite cheap. That equates to about $0.25 per joke.*

WHAT COULD BE MORE PRODUCTIVE?

I recently purchased a Nintendo DS and I absolutely adore it. But my mom has other views. As a punishment nowadays, she has started taking it away from me when I should be doing "more productive things." I was wondering if you guys could help.

John M.
via the Internet

Try to get your hands on a copy of Nintendogs, then next time she takes your DS away from you, ask her, "Why do you hate puppies?" If that doesn't do the trick, show her this month's Brain Age preview on page 30.

BLAST PROCESSING

I really like everything Nintendo has done with the Revolution, but I was wondering, is it going to be made of bulletproof material? I've been slightly disappointed to see that no other Nintendo console has been able to survive a close-range shotgun blast.

Pat E.
via the Internet

We've received countless letters relating to how durable Nintendo hardware has been, but Pat here evidently has higher standards. To the best of our knowledge, the Revolution will not be bulletproof. Should some thug approach your console with a shotgun, however, you can always use the nunchaku-style controller to fight him off.

COURT IS IN SESSION

The other day, my friend had a Super Smash Bros. tournament. I made it to the final round and won, but the person I beat said that I cheated. Each time I killed him, I would corner him to the edge of the arena and knock him off. After that, he would try to jump back on, but I would wait at the edge and hit him off again. He called this "camping the edges," and said it was cheating. I told him that I would e-mail Nintendo Power and get an expert's opinion.

Dastardly Glacien
via the Internet

Though not the most noble of tactics, we certainly wouldn't consider that cheating. And frankly, he should have expected much worse from someone who goes by the name Dastardly.

BE CAREFUL WHAT YOU WISH FOR

Regarding your Top 200 Games of All Time articles, I would like to ask you to surprise us readers with a game that we would never expect to be #1. Don't give the top honor to a game we all expect to win.

Chese S.
via the Internet

We don't want to let the cat out of the bag, but let's just say quite a few members of the NP crew recognize the unparalleled brilliance that was Iggy's Reckin' Balls.

WI-FI WONDERINGS

I was thinking about the Nintendo Wi-Fi Connection and wondering, what if

Nintendo re-released some of the current DS titles with Wi-Fi compatibility? Personally, I think Wi-Fi Meteos would be awesome. What do you guys think?

RJ
via the Internet

As much as we'd love to get our hands on a Wi-Fi-enabled Meteos, we'd rather see Nintendo focus on implementing Wi-Fi play in upcoming titles. See this month's Writers' Block on page105 for our Wi-Fi wish list.

I don't have a DS yet, but I plan to get the Mario Kart bundle. I've got a question about whether it will work with all Wi-Fi routers. My dad says you need a MAC address to get onto our house's wireless network. So does the DS have a MAC address? I hope so, 'cuz I don't want to go to a coffee shop just to play Mario Kart or Animal Crossing.

Roy51
via the Internet

The DS does indeed have a MAC address and will work with most wireless routers. Check out nintendowifi.com for more information.

I have a question about the Nintendo Wi-Fi Connection. If you're playing a game, let's say Mario Kart DS, and someone decides not to play any more and turns off his or her DS, what happens?

Ben
via the Internet

It may vary from game to game, but in Mario Kart DS the race will continue with the remaining players. That said, leaving in the middle of a Wi-Fi session is just poor form. Hopefully most people will be good sports and stay in the game 'til the end.

MOONSHINE

I just want to know what goes through the heads of the ESRB members when they rate games. For example, the rating for Harvest Moon: A Wonderful Life includes the "Alcohol Reference" descriptor. Alcohol? I have never once seen a reference to an alcoholic beverage in that game.

Rayy M.
via the Internet

The ESRB receives exhaustive materials from publishers regarding anything that might affect a title's rating. As a result, there may be descriptors for things that some players may never see.

OLD MAN

Thanks for making me feel old, Nintendo Power! I used to fill out the contest forms [in the magazine] without fail every month, and I remember circling the various age categories at the time. Well, now when I look at it, the only one left for me to circle is "25 or older." It might as well say, "Circle here, Grandpa!"

Matt K.
via the Internet

We know how you feel, Matt. But look on the bright side—that senior citizen's discount is right around the corner.

QUICK AND DIRTY

Yo, homies at NP! I love you guys (as friends).

sirlittledude
via the Internet

Only as friends? And here we thought our relationship went much deeper than that.

Hey, Nintendo Power! How many video games have you putted in your magazines?

Chuck B.
via the Internet

None of us are big golfers. Besides, video games don't roll very well on the greens.

I lost my Meteos game. Who do I sue?

Gray
via the Internet

Yourself. We know a good lawyer if you need one.

Five minutes later, Jack drove his tractor into the lake.

>LETTER OF THE MONTH

I know a lot of people (including myself) were bummed out when Twilight Princess was delayed. But I just realized something. Many of us have long complained that all of the big releases come out at the same time near the holidays, draining our wallets and leaving us with few new games in the first half of the year. Well, I know there are certainly plenty of other games I want to pick up this November and December that should keep me occupied well into next year. And by the time I'm looking for something new—boom—here comes Zelda. I just wish more publishers would do a better job of spreading out their big releases.

Robert N.
via the Internet

Good point, Robert. What's more, maybe the lack of the 800-pound Zelda gorilla will cause more gamers to pick up some of this year's less-hyped titles—gems like Battalion Wars, Trauma Center: Under the Knife and Gunstar Super Heroes.

This controversy has been raging for ages, so I decided to get your opinion to put an end to it all. Who is more awesome: pirates or ninjas?

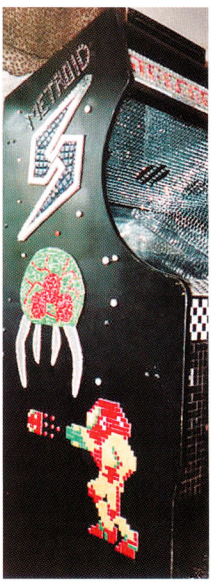
Evan G.
via the Internet

Chuck Norris.

MISSION ACCOMPLISHED

I have been a Nintendo fan since I was 10 years old (I'm 27 now). A few years ago, I stumbled upon an old Pac-Land arcade machine that was no longer working. I gutted the cabinet, installed a new TV set and built shelves inside to hold my four Nintendo consoles. Then I proceeded to create the artwork shown here using nothing but ceramic and mirror tiles. Needless to say, it took a huge chunk of time to complete. The Metroid alone consists of over 500 individual pieces, all of which were cut by hand. Hopefully this will solidify my position as a hard-core Nintendo fanatic.

Derek W.
via the Internet



GOOD TO BE BAD

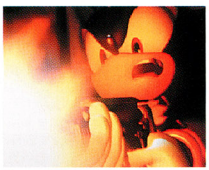
I am angry that there isn't a single game starring a villain like Ganondorf, Bowser, Dr. Eggman, etc. I'm sure a game starring one of these villians would get tons of fans excited. Can't Nintendo just make a Zelda game where

LETTERS

Link is the final boss and you have to face him as the sinister Ganondorf? I always love the bad dudes more than the good.

Jarvismaster5000
via the Internet

Yeah, we've always thought a Ganondorf game that explores the villain's origins could be quite cool. Maybe someday. For now, Shadow the Hedgehog should satisfy your dark side. SonicTeam's latest lets you be as bad as you wanna be.



IS THAT REALLY AN EITHER/OR PROPOSITION?

Do you guys just sit around reading thesauruses like me, or do you travel in time?

Cat Lions
via the Internet

If you really sat around reading the thesaurus, you would have asked if we "embark on chronological excursions." Maybe you should focus more on time travel so you can go back and correct your shameful omission of flowery synonyms.

DS GETS CIVILIZED?

I really like the DS, but I was wondering if Sid Meier is planning to release Civilization for the system. I love the franchise, and I think a Civ for DS would be really cool. You could use the touch screen to move your units instead of a mouse. Maybe you could even play Wi-Fi across the country!

Zero
via the Internet

While there are no definitive plans yet, Sid Meier has stated that his company, Firaxis, is exploring DS development. If we hear anything more concrete, you can be sure we'll jump all over it.

PLEASE WRITE US:

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THAT'S NOT NICE

This is just a question, but why do you guys at NP love Zelda games so much? In my opinion, [they] suck very badly. Please be open to the thought that Zelda games suck a lot of the time.

v jolly
via the Internet

Unless you're talking about the CD-i games, please be open to the thought that you suck a lot of the time.

AGE-OLD QUESTION

How old is Mario? Not the number of years his games have been around, but Mario as a character.

Dylan R.
via the Internet

Much like Dick Clark and that kid from Webster, *Mario is ageless. Unlike Dick Clark, however, he doesn't have to feed off the souls of babies to preserve his immortality.*

MOTHER RUSSIA

My name is Yuri and I'm sending this because I'm sick and tired of games like Splinter Cell and Hitman 2. What do I mean? I'm [talking about] all of the bashing those games do against the people of Russia. They always portray us as the bad guys, and the last boss is always some Russian crime boss.

Yuri S.
via the Internet

We hear ya, Yuri. If it's any consolation, we would never do anything to perpetuate the "evil Russian" stereotype.

SEPARATED AT BIRTH?

Have you noticed that Marshal Nova from Battalion Wars looks just like Ivan Drago from *Rocky IV*?

Rob M.
via the Internet

Now that you mention it . . .

"I must break you."

SWEET SORROW

I found a Castlevania: Dawn of Sorrow Easter egg! If you begin a new game with Aria of Sorrow in the DS's GBA slot, you'll start with the Rare Ring!

Jared S.
via the Internet

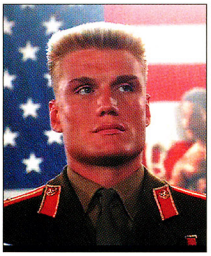
SAGELY WISDOM

I noticed that in the last few pages of the magazine you always print sage reviews. It says that these "sages" are "put through the wringer (so to speak)" in order to have such an honor bestowed upon them. I was wondering exactly what I have to do to become a sage; I want to see if I have what it takes.

Chad
via the Internet

Sages are chosen from members of the nintendo.com community who have been active participants on the Nsider forums for at least three months. Once you've been selected, you must also pass a writing test.

Oh, and it helps if you're a pirate, a ninja or a Russian mob boss.



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MOST WANTED

Go to nintendo.com to vote for your most-wanted games and let your voice be heard!

>NINTENDO GAMECUBE

We've run out of things to say in this space, so we're going to start printing simple recipes next month.

1. The Legend of Zelda: Twilight Princess
2. Peter Jackson's King Kong
3. Prince of Persia: The Two Thrones
4. Chibi-Robo
5. Sonic Riders

>GAME BOY ADVANCE

As any die-hard RPG fan can tell you, it doesn't get much better than Final Fantasy IV.

1. Final Fantasy IV
2. Drill Dozer
3. Kong: 8th Wonder of the World
4. Metal Slug
5. Pirate Battle

>NINTENDO DS

Mario Kart DS is finally out. If you haven't been defeated at the hands of the NP crew, be patient. Your time will come.

1. New Super Mario Bros.
2. Metroid Prime Hunters
3. Final Fantasy III
4. Electroplankton
5. Battles of Prince of Persia

TOP SELLERS >NINTENDO GAMECUBE

The World Series might have gone much differently if the Astros had Bowser playing right field.

1. Mario Superstar Baseball
2. WWE Day of Reckoning 2
3. Sonic Gems Collection
4. Madden NFL 06
5. Super Mario Sunshine
6. Pokémon Colosseum
7. Super Smash Bros. Melee
8. The Legend of Zelda: The Wind Waker
9. The Incredible Hulk: Ultimate Destruction
10. Pokémon XD: Gale of Darkness

TOP SELLERS >GAME BOY ADVANCE

Seriously, if Gunstar Super Heroes doesn't appear on this list next month . . . let's just say we know where you live.

1. Pokémon Emerald
2. LEGO *Star Wars*
3. Dragon Ball GT: Transformation
4. Disney Princess
5. Super Mario Advance 4: Super Mario Bros. 3
6. Madagascar
7. Disney's Kim Possible 3: Team Possible
8. Danny Phantom: The Ultimate Enemy
9. That's So Raven 2: Supernatural Style
10. The Simpsons: Road Rage

"We are the champions, my frieeend!"

TOP SELLERS >NINTENDO DS

Puppies and war: a winning combination.

1. Nintendogs: Chihuahua
2. Nintendogs: Labrador Retriever
3. Nintendogs: Dachshund
4. Advance Wars: Dual Strike
5. Yu-Gi-Oh!: Nightmare Troubadour
6. Super Mario 64 DS
7. Kirby: Canvas Curse
8. WarioWare: Touched!
9. Lunar: Dragon Song
10. Ultimate Spider-Man

Sales data courtesy of the NPDFunworld TRSTS Video Game Source.

London
8:21 PM
Maui
9:21 AM
Manhattan
3:21 PM
Lunch Break
Seattle
12:21 PM
nintendo
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connection
There's always
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Look for the Nintendo Wi-Fi Connection logo on your favorite Nintendo DS games.
2. GET CONNECTED
Connect at home or at a Nintendo Wi-Fi Connection hotspot. Visit NintendoWiFi.com to find free hotspots nearest you.
3. PLAY
Challenge your friends or take on the world. Nintendo Wi-Fi Connection lets you decide.
NINTENDO DS.
www.NintendoWiFi.com

NARUTO—AT LAST!

DUAL SCREAM FOR EVIL

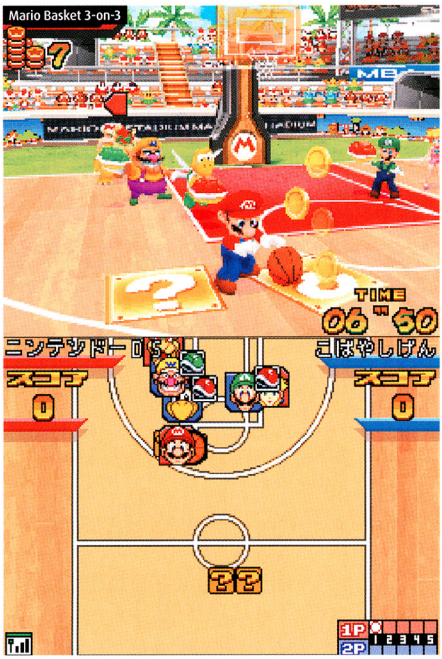
SWEET, SWEET MANA

IN STYLUS FOR NEXT SEASON?

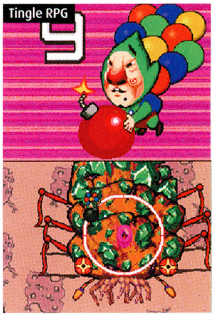
Touching 2006

Thanks to a sudden announcement of DS titles slated for Japanese release in '06, North American gamers get a look at what may be coming our way.

Will Tingle's unexpected RPG touch down anywhere but Japan? In early October, Nintendo unveiled many DS games due in '06, which raised the question of which ones would land in North America. We can only hope that heavy hitters like Mario's upcoming basketball game will be joined by sequels to series that we haven't seen here yet, such as the RPG Magical Vacation, which developer Brownie Brown is likely to make as enchanting an experience on the DS as it was on the GBA. Nintendo unveiled many of its own games (see the following sneak peeks, all with temporary titles, of course), and several other publishers revealed a flood of genre-spanning titles planned for next year. Among the brightest, and already slated for North America, are two from Square Enix, which provided new details on its Mana DS game (see page 22), plus the major news that Final Fantasy III will not be a 2-D port but a full 3-D reimagination. We're hoping some of the games will make their North American debut at next year's E3. Stay tuned! —Steven G.



After dominating one sport after the next on the GCN and GBA, Mario will bring his trademark wild style to basketball on the Nintendo DS.



Wario usually has the corner on the weird market, and a glimpse of his "mystic thief" game confirms that he's doing the DS his own way. But the Tingle RPG may give Wario a run for his money.

ASH (ARCHAIC SEALED HEAT): Final Fantasy father Hironobu Sakaguchi let a new detail slip about his Mistwalker studio's RPG sim: It'll be built on prerendered 3-D visuals that appear to be beyond compare.

The sequel to one of the most dazzling GBA games, the magic-student RPG released only in Japan, may win the same rep on the DS.

One of the most anticipated titles for the DS is finally pinned down for an '06 release in Japan.

Nintendo's starfish hero has been gaining a following in Japan since 2002 with a new GBA platformer each year. Where will the little star go on the DS?

Very popular in Japan, the series that lets warmongers customize robos then wage war in holosseums will soon be conquering the Nintendo DS.

Actually due just before the end of '05, Game Fortune Bag plans to stuff a stunning number of board games, card games and other diversions onto one game card.

With legal-eagle series Phoenix Wright turning heads, will Nintendo's own upcoming 2-D adventure thriller find its way to North America?

The potential for puzzle titles on the DS is gigantic. Joining Nintendo's previously announced Touch Panic is an entirely different looping-action game, Puzzloop DS.

RETRO ACTIVE

Anniversary Gift

Celebrate the 20th anniversary of Nintendo consoles in North America with a limited edition of the stylish Game Boy Micro.

If you've been holding off on getting a Game Boy Micro, mark November 28 on your calendar—that's the launch date for the Special 20th Anniversary Edition Game Boy Micro, which celebrates the two decades since Nintendo home video game consoles were first released in the US and Canada. Modeled after the controller for the 8-bit Famicom system—the Japanese equivalent of the Nintendo Entertainment System, or NES—the limited-edition Micro features a classic red-and-gold faceplate design. Additionally, the commemorative Micro comes with a coupon for $10 off of any Nintendo-published Game Boy Advance game—perfect for retro-appeal titles like Dr. Mario & Puzzle League or Final Fantasy IV Advance. The Special 20th Anniversary Edition Micro is priced at $99.99 (MSRP). —Chris H.

The red-and-gold pattern recreates the look of a vintage Famicom controller.

A MAGE *AND* A KNIGHT?

Knight Moves

Mage Knight fans can finally reclaim their tables this spring when the collectible-miniatures game comes to the DS.

Strategy RPGs have been something of a rarity on the DS thus far, but Namco and developer Big Blue Bubble will try to fill that void with Mage Knight: Destiny's Soldier. Based on the same combat system and rules as its tabletop counterpart, the game lets you build a custom army with over 90 different units. In the story-driven single-player mode, you'll recruit new forces by making the right choices on the battlefield and earning respect points. You can also trade characters with a friend before going head-to-head in a multiplayer skirmish (the game's wireless mode supports up to four players). Each unit costs a different number of points to bring into battle, so much of the strategy comes from assembling the best army you can with the points you have. Once you've deployed your troops, you'll control everything via the touch screen, including rolling the dice. The interface was still a bit clunky in our early play test, but if the developers can tighten things up, it should prove as easy and intuitive as moving the miniatures around on a table.
—Steve T.

Like any good fantasy universe, Mage Knight's boasts a multitude of diverse races. Here we can see that they all have one thing in common: appreciation of a nice tree.

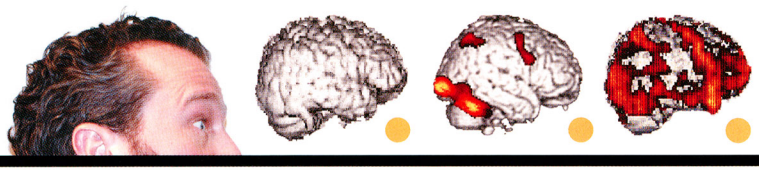
The top screen serves many functions in Mage Knight. It shows a zoomed-out view of the map during battle, displays conversations between characters and offers comprehensive unit information when you're assembling your army.

CUZ WE'LL DO ANYTHING GUINEA PIG! FOR OUR READERS

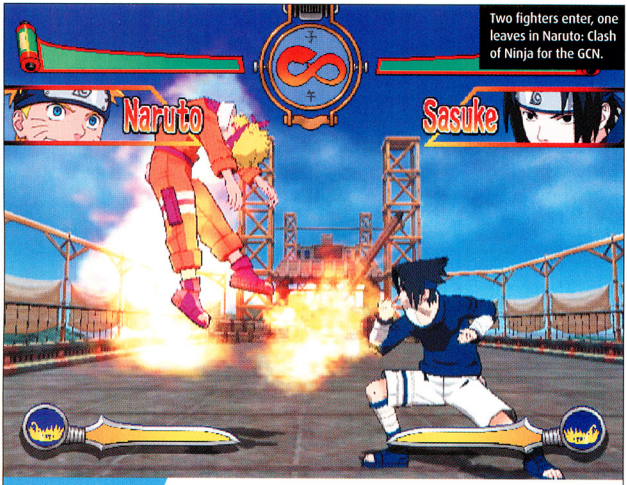
This Is Your Brain On . . .

WITH THE NEWS that Nintendo's brain-training DS smash is crossing over from Japan in 2006, we couldn't resist testing Brain Age: Train Your Brain in Minutes a Day on ourselves. The theory put forth by professor Ryuta Kawashima is that quick mental exercises—like those in the game—help increase the flow of blood around the brain, a possible indicator of "brain age." What kind of brain did we find in NP staffer Steven Grimm's cranium when he first submitted himself to Brain Age? Guess for yourself!

Oh, multiple choice! Over the hill, middle-aged or spry as a spring chicken?



Answer: B. Grimm's brain wasn't a lost cause, but it did start out with crutches and a colostomy bag. But after a steady diet of Brain Age exercises, he's now doing mental backflips compared to the rest of the NP slackers.



Two fighters enter, one leaves in Naruto: Clash of Ninja for the GCN.

WALK SOFTLY AND . . .

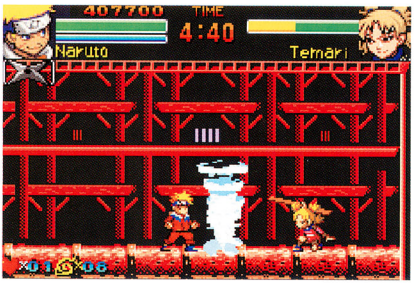
Ninjas Make Noise

Manga and anime phenomenon Naruto is set to hit North American gamers hard in 2006 with four D3PA-published ninja-in-training titles.

Dubbed by some as *Harry Potter* with ninjas, *Naruto* is Masashi Kishimoto's tale of three Ninja Academy classmates who strive to make names for themselves in the greater ninja world. The comic has been big in Japan since its 1999 debut and has spun off into both an animated series and a fighting-game franchise. In an attempt to mirror that success in North America, *Shonen Jump* brought the comic to its pages in 2002, the Cartoon Network placed the show in its Toonami block this year, and early next year the games will begin to arrive, along with toys and action figures. D3PA will publish the Nintendo-system titles, starting with Naruto: Clash of Ninja for the GCN and Naruto: Ninja Council for the GBA, both coming in March.

Clash of Ninja, developed by 8ing (Zatch Bell!: Mamodo Battles) is a deceptively simple one-on-one fighter that favors ease of play over complex combos. Eight combatants, including Naruto Uzumaki, pals Sakura and Sasuke, and their teacher, Kakashi, build up Chakra energy. They use the energy to warp across the screen to keep from being cornered and to unleash special attacks, such as Naruto's Sexy Jutsu, which transforms him into an attractive woman temporarily (distracting his opponents), and Thousand Years of Pain (more comical than devastating).

Clash of Ninja 2, a four-player fighter, is due in September for the GCN, along with an undetermined additional GBA title. —George S.



Developed by Arc System Works, makers of the Guilty Gear titles, Naruto: Ninja Council is a side-scrolling action title that's heavy on fighting. The second GBA title may go in an entirely different direction.

DreamWorks
SHREK SUPERSLAM

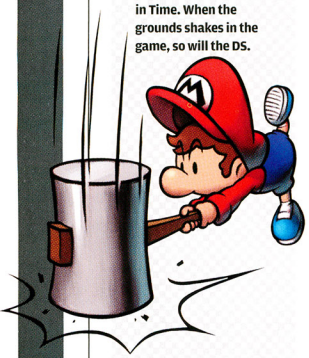
PINOCCHIO
SPECIAL MOVE
BUZZ BOMBER

Pinocchio fights like a real boy!

I'm Feeling You, Baby

The DS Rumble Pak adds a sensory shake-up to Mario & Luigi.

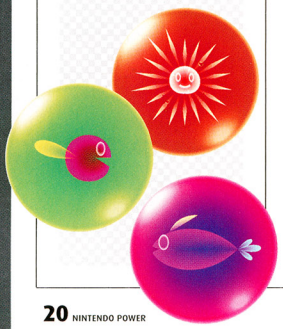
Available with Metroid Prime Pinball, the Nintendo DS Rumble Pak, which fits into the handheld's GBA slot, will be compatible with Mario & Luigi: Partners in Time. When the grounds shakes in the game, so will the DS.



The Buzz Is in the Air

Electroplankton will be available online and in NYC on 1/9/06.

On January 9th, Electroplankton will make waves with exclusive retail-store sales at the Nintendo World Store in New York City. Fans will also be able to purchase the game from all major online retailers and at www.nintendo.com.



The Big News. In Short.

EA's unexpected flight plan for **Superman Returns: The Videogame** may correct the DC hero's losing streak in gaming; the publisher has put its Tiburon studio on the project. Will the Madden-minded team score a win with the June '06 movie tie-in?. . . Speaking of Electronic Arts's franchise work, **Steven Spielberg** has signed a deal to collaborate with EA on three original franchise properties. What might the mind behind such flicks as *Jaws*, *Saving Private Ryan* and *War of the Worlds* do when he applies his vision to gaming? EA's Los Angeles studio will be the first to find out. . . . Monkey see, monkey do, but monkey probably not throw poo: That's the charm of **Curious George**, who'll make mayhem on the Nintendo GameCube and Game Boy Advance when his movie swings into theaters in February. . . . First Pac-Pix, then Pac 'n Roll, now **Pac-Man World 3**: Namco's blowing out Pac-Man's 25th anniversary with one more title, a DS version of its recent platformer that's due in December. . . . Zi Corporation, a technology company that specializes in software interfaces, has licensed its Decuma **handwriting-recognition technology** to Nintendo for use by DS developers. . . . Square Enix has reaffirmed plans to bring classic **FINAL FANTASY** games to light with the announcement that it'll follow up the release of FFIV on the Game Boy Advance with **FFV and FFVI**, also destined for the GBA. . . . —Steven G.

FEET OF FURY

Urban Renewal

EA Sports Big's FIFA Street returns to the GCN this spring, promising more action, more style and more ways to win.

Soccer fans will get to take it to the streets once again when EA Sports Big releases FIFA Street 2 on the Nintendo GameCube this spring. Like the other Street titles, this four-on-four arcade-style sports game isn't just about winning—it's about doing so with over-the-top style. FIFA Street 2 introduces new upgrades to the formula, such as the Beat Battle system, in which two competitors face off and try to outperform each other with fancy footwork, along with additional tide-turning Gamebreaker shots and more-humiliating Trick Stick moves, in which players use the C Stick and buttons in conjunction to disgrace opponents. New locales, such as the beaches of Brazil, are also featured. FIFA Street 2 is under development at EA Canada. —Chris H.

Scared Wireless

After more than a month of speculation, it's finally official—Capcom will release Resident Evil: Deadly Silence for Nintendo DS.

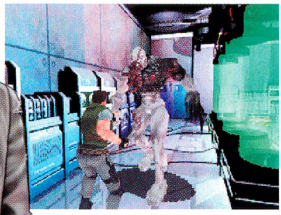
Marking a decade of Resident Evil frights and fights, Deadly Silence will reprise the original RE. But don't think for a second you're getting the same game that debuted in 1996.

The game has been completely rebuilt to take advantage of the unique features of the DS; it will include a persistent map and status meter on the upper screen. Deadly Silence also weaves in new control methods to take advantage of the touch screen; for example, you'll use the stylus to slash with your knife, as well as shake off enemies that grab hold of you. Even the microphone will be used to solve puzzles, as well as to resuscitate other characters.

But what we're most excited for is the different multiplayer modes that Deadly Silence will offer. Up to four players can connect to play in vs. mode, where they compete to see how many zombies they can butcher, or in cooperative mode, where they work together to solve various puzzles. All of the multiplayer action takes place on a new mansion map. Look for more news about Deadly Silence next month. —Chris S.

Deadly Silence is true to the RE tradition of funky camera angles and awesome graphics.

He might not show it, but trust us—he's excited to be coming to the DS.



Just like in Resident Evil 4, your knife will always be at the ready.

Spoiler alert! Wesker is not at all a nice man.

GINGY

SPECIAL MOVE

PEPPERMINT FURY

Gingy's bringing the pain with the candy cane!

Square Enix's Mana series is on fire with news of its DS debut.

ARTFUL DODGER

Mana Still Has Secrets

Though details on a new Secret of Mana gem for the DS are scarce, art from publisher Square Enix has action-RPG fans holding their breath.

With its winter 2006 Japanese launch looming, Seiken Densetsu DS: Children of Mana looks to be a stunner. Seiken Densetsu 2 for the Super Famicom was published for the Super NES by Square in 1993 as Secret of Mana, and a related title, Sword of Mana, was published by Nintendo in 2003 for the GBA. Children of Mana has not been announced for North American release officially, but we're keeping our fingers crossed. Screens show that the game follows its predecessors in 2-D action-RPG style, and the accompanying artwork displays an attention to detail. Clever interface design in earlier titles gave us ring menus. The touch screen should allow for additional innovations. Another Mana feature, co-op play, may also be in the works. —George S.

As the art indicates, Children of Mana continues the series's tradition of finding magic in nature.

Children of Mana gameplay looks similar to that of it predecessors. Touch screen details are pending.

DON'T-MISS Calendar

While the Nintendo Wi-Fi Connection rules the buzz, many major titles are piling up for the holidays!

11-28

It's a hunk o' burning DS love for Mario.

Though the Nintendo WFC has been connecting gamers via Wi-Fi since Mario Kart DS's November 15 debut, today marks the release of the MKDS bundle pack, which includes the new Hot Rod Red DS (and racing decals), for $149.99 MSRP.

11-28

The 28th, again? Blame Luigi!

The DS continues its stellar streak with Mario & Luigi: Partners in Time, which should really be subtitled Partners Who Hijack a Second Column of the Calendar. Is it truly a work of RPG comic genius? Our review on page 110 will give you the scoop.

12-5

A planet moves to Wild World.

That rushing sound you'll hear today isn't geese migrating for the winter, it's fans flocking to Animal Crossing on the DS, then hightailing it to each other's towns via Wi-Fi.

12-5

More on the 5th? Blame Mario!

Now the GCN and GBA go full-tilt Mario. Super Mario Strikers kicks it on the GCN, and Mario Tennis: Power Tour and Dr. Mario/Puzzle League hit the big time on GBA.

12-12

FFIV takes up the sword.

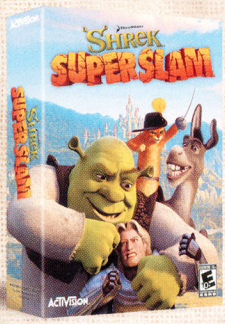
The Final Fantasy that proved its majesty on the Super NES returns with new content on the GBA. All hail one of the best RPGs ever made! Now we will lick its boots.

GRAB YOUR FRIENDS & HAVE A BRAWL!

PUSS IN BOOTS | **SHREK** | **DONKEY**

SPECIAL MOVES

HYPNO PUSS | **GREEN STORM** | **DONKEY STAMPEDE**



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DREAMWORKS

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Slam through 16 fully destructible environments.

Battle it out with signature fighting moves and over 20 cool weapons and magic potions.

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PlayStation 2 | XBOX | NINTENDO GAMECUBE | NINTENDO DS | GAME BOY ADVANCE | PC CD-ROM SOFTWARE

EVERYONE 10+ | E 10+ CONTENT RATED BY ESRB

Crude Humor
Cartoon Violence

DREAMWORKS ANIMATION SKG | GRAY MATTER | SHABA GAMES | AMAZE ENTERTAINMENT

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GAME WATCH FORECAST

While publishers focus on delivering on '05 promises rather than dishing out '06 surprises, Forecast sees tons of titles head to store shelves this month—it's a good time to game!

NINTENDO GAMECUBE

American Chopper: Full Throttle	Activision	●○○
Barnyard	THQ	●●○
Cabela's Dangerous Hunts 2	Activision	●○○
Call of Duty 2: Big Red One	Activision	●●●
Chaos Field Expanded	0-3	●●○
Chibi Robo	Nintendo	●●○
The Chronicles of Narnia: The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe	Disney	●●●
Curious George	Namco	●●○
FIFA Street 2	EA	●○○
Greg Hastings' Tournament Paintball	Activision	●○○
Gun	Activision	●●●
Harry Potter and the Goblet of Fire	EA	●●●
Harvest Moon: Magical Melody	Natsume	●●○
James Bond 007: From Russia with Love	EA	●●●
Karaoke Revolution Party	Konami	●●●
Kirby*	Nintendo	●●○
The Legend of Zelda: Twilight Princess	Nintendo	●●○
Mario Party 7	Nintendo	●●●
Mega Man X Collection	Capcom	●●○
Mini-Golf Mayhem	Crave	●●○
The Movies	Activision	●●○
Naruto: Clash of Ninja	D3PA	●●○
Naruto: Clash of Ninja 2	D3PA	●●○
Need for Speed: Most Wanted	EA	●●●
Odama	Nintendo	●●○
Pac-Man World 3	Namco	●●●
Pac-Man World Rally	Namco	●●○
Peter Jackson's King Kong	Ubisoft	●●●
Prince of Persia: The Two Thrones	Ubisoft	●●○
Rampage: Total Destruction	Midway	●●○
Shadow the Hedgehog	Sega	●●●
The Sims 2	EA	●●●
Sonic Riders	Sega	●●○
Starcraft: Ghost	VU Games	●●○
Super Mario Strikers	Nintendo	●●●
Teen Titans	Majesco	●●○
Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles 3: Mutant Nightmare	Konami	●●●
Tom Clancy's Ghost Recon: Advanced Warfighter	Ubisoft	●○○
Tom Clancy's Splinter Cell 4*	Ubisoft	●○○
True Crime: New York City	Activision	●●●
Viewtiful Joe: Red Hot Rumble	Capcom	●●●
World Championship Poker	Crave	●●○

NEW DEVELOPMENTS!

KONG'S DS ATTACK

Just when we started wondering if Peter Jackson's King Kong for the DS was vaporware, the big gorilla emerged from the mist. The GCN and GBA games will hit on November 22, and Ubisoft says the DS version will come out shortly thereafter—hopefully before the movie's December 14 release.

OFF THE LEASH

Nintendogs fever remains very high—and it's no wonder. Puppies couldn't be cuter. Well, maybe they'd be cuter on cards? Fans will find out with Nintendogs Trading Card Fun Packs ($1.99 MSRP), which each contain five trading cards (that show info, tips or just fun stuff), plus a sticker set and a tattoo set. Now fans can prove themselves officially obsessed.

Announced
In Development
Ready for Release

Game Title — Publisher ●●●

Game Title — Publisher ●●● — New games added to the list

GAME BOY ADVANCE

Barnyard	THQ	●●○
The Chronicles of Narnia: The Lion, The Witch and the Wardrobe	Disney	●●●
Curious George	Namco	●●○
Dr. Mario/Puzzle League	Nintendo	●●●
Drill Dozer	Nintendo	●●○
The Fairly OddParents!*	THQ	●●●
Final Fantasy IV Advance	Nintendo	●●○
Hamtaro: Rainbow Rescue	Nintendo	●○○
Hardcore Pool	Telegames	●●○
Harry Potter and the Goblet of Fire	EA	●●●
Hi Hi Puffy AmiYumi: Kaznapped!	D3PA	●●●
Hugo: Bukkazoom	Namco	●●○
The Incredibles: Rise of the Underminer	THQ	●●●
Kong: The 8th Wonder of the World	Ubisoft	●●●
Legend of the River King Advance	Natsume	●●○
Mario Tennis: Power Tour	Nintendo	●●○
Mega Man Anniversary Collection	Capcom	●●○
Metal Slug	SNK	●●○
Naruto 2*	D3PA	●○○
Naruto: Ninja Council	D3PA	●●○
Pirate Battle	Orbital	●●○
The Proud Family	Disney	●●○
Santa Claus Saves the Earth	Telegames	●●○
Scurge: Hive	Orbital	●●○
Sea World: Shamu's Deep Sea Adventures	Activision	●●○
The Sims 2	EA	●●●
Super Robot Monkey Team Hyperforce Go!	Disney	●○○
Tony Hawk's American Sk8land	Activision	●●●
Top Spin 2	2K Sports	●●○
Ultimate Pocket Games	Telegames	●●○
Ultimate Puzzle Games	Telegames	●●○
Ultimate Table Games	Telegames	●●○
Winx Club	Konami	●●○
World Poker Tour 2K6	2K Sports	●○○
World Reborn	Destination	●●○
X-Bladez: Inline Skater	Crave	●●○
Xyanide	Playlogic	●○○

NINTENDO DS

A Boy and His Blob	Majesco	●●○
Age of Empires: The Age of Kings	Majesco	●●○
Animal Crossing: Wild World	Nintendo	●●●
ATV Quad Fury 2	Majesco	●●○
Barnyard	THQ	●○○
Battles of Prince of Persia	Ubisoft	●●○
Black & White Creatures	Majesco	●●○
Blades of Thunder 2	SummitSoft	●●○
Boktai*	Konami	●○○
Brain Age: Train Your Brain in Minutes a Day	Nintendo	●●○
Brain Twisting Game Vol. 1*	Aruze	●●○
Burnout Legends	EA	●●●
Bust-a-Move DS	Majesco	●●○
Children of Mana	Square Enix	●●○
ChoroQ DS	Atlus	●○○
The Chronicles of Narnia: The Lion, The Witch and the Wardrobe	Disney	●●●
Dragon Ball Z: Supersonic Warriors 2	Atari	●●●
Dragon Booster	Konami	●●○
Dragon Quest Monsters*	Square Enix	●○○
Dynasty Warriors*	Koei	●●○
Egg Monster Heroes	Square Enix	●●○
Electroplankton	Nintendo	●●○
Europa Universalis II	Pocket PC	●●○
Final Fantasy III	Square Enix	●●○
Final Fantasy: Crystal Chronicles*	Square Enix	●○○
Finding Nemo*	THQ	●○○
Fushigi No Dungeon*	Chun Soft	●○○
The Game of Life DS	Atlus	●○○
Golden Nugget Casino DS	Majesco	●●○
Guilty Gear Dust Strikers	Majesco	●●○
Harry Potter and the Goblet of Fire	EA	●●●
Harvest Moon DS	Natsume	●●○
Hi Hi Puffy AmiYumi*	D3PA	●○○
Historical Simulation Game*	Koei	●○○
The Incredibles: Rise of the Underminer	THQ	●●●
Intern Tendo Dokuta	Spike	●●○
Jam with the Band*	Nintendo	●●○
Johnny Rocketfingers	Conspiracy	●○○
Legend of the River King*	Natsume	●○○
The Legend of Zelda: Four Swords*	Nintendo	●○○
Lizzie McGuire & That's So Raven*	Disney	●●○
Mage Knight: Destiny's Soldier	Namco	●●○
Mah-Jong*	Koei	●○○
Mario & Luigi: Partners in Time	Nintendo	●●●
Mario Kart DS	Nintendo	●●●
Metroid Prime Hunters	Nintendo	●●○
Mini RC Rally	SummitSoft	●●○
Mobile Suit Gundam Seed	Bandai	●○○
Monster Rancher	Tecmo	●○○
Moonlight Fables*	Majesco	●○○
Need for Speed: Most Wanted	EA	●●●
New Super Mario Bros.*	Nintendo	●●○
One Piece	Bandai	●●○
Organizer Plus	SummitSoft	●○○
Pac-Man World 3	Namco	●●○
Peter Jackson's King Kong	Ubisoft	●●●
Pirates of the Caribbean: Dead Man's Chest	Disney	●○○
Quad Desert Fury 2	Majesco	●○○
Resident Evil: Deadly Silence	Capcom	●●○
SBK: Snowboard Kids DS	Atlus	●●●
Scurge: Hive	Orbital	●●○
Sea World: Shamu's Deep Sea Adventures	Activision	●○○
Sega Casino	Sega	●●●
Shin Megami Tensei DS*	Atlus	●○○
The Sims 2	EA	●●●
Slime Morimori Dragon Quest*	Square Enix	●○○
Sonic Rush	Sega	●●●
Super Princess Peach	Nintendo	●●○
Tamagotchi Connection: Corner Shop	Bandai	●●○
Tony Hawk's American Sk8land	Activision	●●●
Top Gun	Mastiff	●○○
Top Spin 2	2K Sports	●●○
Touch Golf DS*	Nintendo	●●○
Ultimate Brain Games	Telegames	●○○
Ultimate Card Games	Telegames	●●○
Ultimate Pocket Games	Telegames	●○○
Vandal Hearts*	Konami	●○○
Winx Club	Konami	●○○
World Soccer Winning Eleven*	Konami	●○○
Worms*	THQ	●●○

* TENTATIVE TITLE

CELEBRATE PAC-MAN'S 25TH BIRTHDAY WITH THESE GREAT GAMES!

Take advantage of the Nintendo DS™ like no other game as you draw Pac-Man into life!
Help Pac-Man as he tries to stop those mischievous ghosts within the pages of a book. Control the action with your stylus as you draw Pac-Man, arrows and bombs to complete your quest of stopping the ghosts and freeing Pac-Man.

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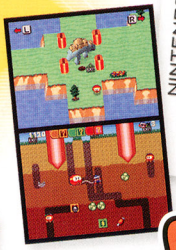
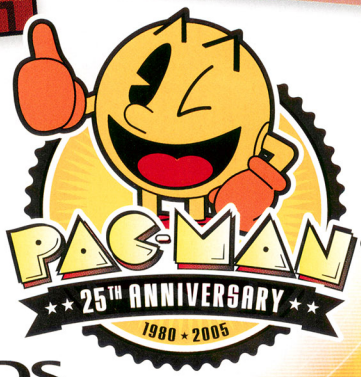
Available For: **Game Boy® Advance**

Dig Dug Strikes Again!
Classic enemies Pooka and Fygar plus a host of new monsters are causing trouble and it's up to Dig Dug and his crew to dig them a watery grave.



Pac is back and ready to roll!
Join Pac-Man on his quest to save Pac-Land after fellow Pacs have been turned into spheres by the evil Ghost, Golvis. Control Pac-Man like a track-ball, chomping away on pellets and monsters through the colorful worlds of PAC 'N ROLL!



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RP-E 10+
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Creativity and new twists on gameplay dominate Winter releases.

Battles of Prince of Persia Pg. 31
Black and White Creatures Pg. 28
Brain Age: Train Your Brain in Minutes a Day Pg. 30
Chibi-Robo Pg. 26
Drill Dozer Pg. 30
Electroplankton Pg. 28
Sonic Riders Pg. 27
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Tamagotchi Connection: Corner Shop Pg. 31

You, Robot

>CHIBI-ROBO

PLATFORM: GCN • PUBLISHER: NINTENDO
DEVELOPER: SKIP • RELEASE: 2006

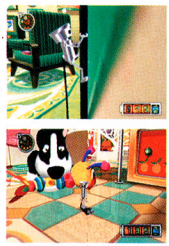
Giftpia, Chibi-Robo will avenge you. Chibi-Robo's the second game from Giftpia developer Skip, whose ultracrazy debut never made it to North America. Skip must have dreamed up its latest while watching Pixar's *Toy Story* after a few too many . . . um, Red Bulls. Even Miyamoto did a double take when he saw the crazy "tiny bot, big house" idea, and helped Skip develop its high-imagination universe even further.

One of the most radical changes was putting the player's head in the game by doing away with simlike pointing and clicking in favor of direct control. A good move, since the action takes a butler robot across a house that's as big and wondrous as any Mushroom Kingdom you've seen, where floors stretch to the horizon, the sofa's big as a mountain, shelves loom like cliffs and lamp cords serve as convenient climbing vines. That's just the living room. Upstairs, downstairs, the backyard—Chibi-Robo *goes* places as he does chores, reaches into his Swiss-Army-Knife-like head for tools, and tries to please everyone.

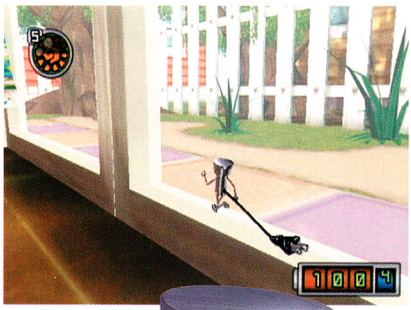
Furthermore, the game is such a spectacle of music and sound effects, much like Giftpia, that if you close your eyes while someone's playing Chibi-Robo, you'll think you're hearing a Looney Tunes cartoon, a trumpet fanfare for a king, the zippy opening to a '70s game show, trance music on the radio, and someone going unplugged with a guitar, all within several minutes. What other developer is having this much overcaffeinated fun fusing music with gameplay? No one is even close.

Skip has also created a cast so over-the-top that its characters seem like long-lost cousins to the Nintendo family, owing perhaps somewhat to Miyamoto's involvement. Chibi-Robo, the even-keeled guy in the bunch, is totally endearing as he tries to serve the madhouse, which includes a schlubby dad (with a toy addiction), a stressed housewife (desperate for a normal life) and their loopy daughter (who thinks she's a frog). And the house is full of needy, neurotic toys. The dog's chew toy pines for the cosmic-action hero that patrols the house; dozens of egg soldiers seek a good recruit; a wooden pirate wants his lost ship; and a freaky thing in the basement (half teacup, half four-armed Indian god) plays cosmic games with everyone's money. Crazy, crazy, crazy. The big question: Are North American gamers crazy enough for Chibi-Robo? —STEVEN G.

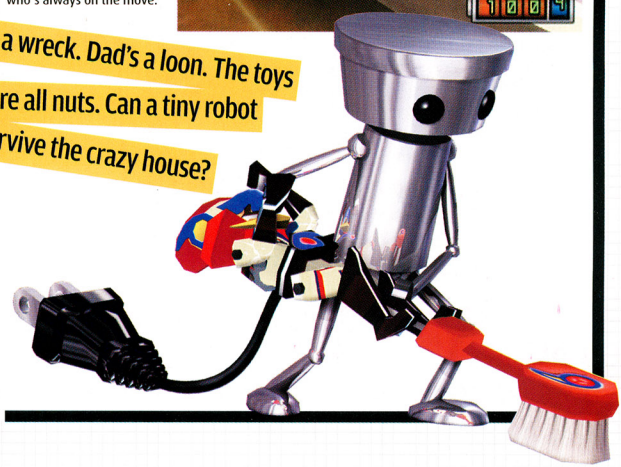
First step to saving a family: stop their caffeine addiction.



Domestic bliss? Not for Chibi, who's always on the move.

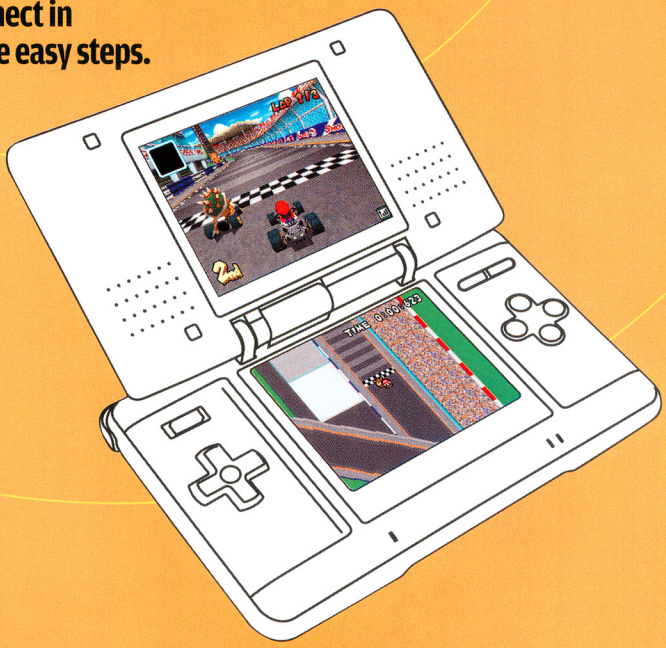


Mom's a wreck. Dad's a loon. The toys are all nuts. Can a tiny robot survive the crazy house?



nintendo Wi-Fi connection

Connect in three easy steps.



The Right Way to Wi-Fi

Ever wanted to play Mario Kart with someone in Japan, visit a cross-country friend's Animal Crossing town or challenge a complete stranger to a Tony Hawk match? Now you can with the free-of-charge Nintendo Wi-Fi Connection for Nintendo DS. Even if you know nothing about Wi-Fi, getting connected is as easy as 1-2-3. This guide will teach you the basics of connecting to the Nintendo Wi-Fi Connection. (For more-detailed information, visit www.nintendowifi.com.)

1 Get Equipped

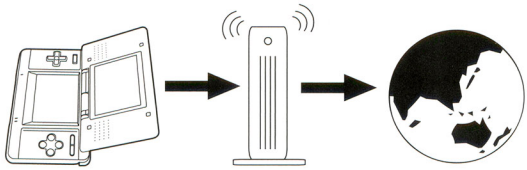
To access the NintendoWi-Fi Connection, you'll need a compatible game. So far, four Wi-Fi-compatible games have been released or announced in North America, all of which offer free access to the network. More Wi-Fi-game announcements are on the way—to know for sure if a game has Wi-Fi capabilities, look for the blue Nintendo Wi-Fi Connection logo on the lower-left corner of the box.

For more information, go to ***nintendowifi.com***

nintendo Wi-Fi connection

2 Get Connected

Not to be confused with LAN play (in which multiple Nintendo DS systems within a small area speak to each other directly), Wi-Fi play requires that you connect your Nintendo DS to the Web to challenge players around the country or even around the world. Connecting your Nintendo DS to the Web requires a wireless router and broadband Internet access. We've outlined some connection scenarios below.



Connecting at Home

Already have a wireless router in your home? Then you can probably connect your Nintendo DS to the Wi-Fi network. To search for routers within range of your DS, go to the Nintendo Wi-Fi Connection Setup page within your game, select Nintendo Wi-Fi Connection Settings, choose an empty connection slot then select Search for an Access Point. Some routers may require you to take other steps (such as entering a WEP key) before you can connect. (For more information and for a complete list of compatible routers, visit www.nintendowifi.com.) In many cases, your DS will automatically search for available routers when you try to connect from within a game, allowing you to skip the Setup page completely.

If you're looking for an alternative to owning a wireless router, consider the Nintendo Wi-Fi USB Connector. Connect the device to a home computer or laptop that is running Windows XP and has high-speed Internet access; your Nintendo DS will use the device to connect to the Web. The Nintendo Wi-Fi USB Connector is available for purchase at www.nintendo.com.

NOTE: The Nintendo Wi-Fi USB Connector works only with Nintendo DS systems.

Connecting at Hotspots

Whether you're eating lunch or having a cup of coffee, Wi-Fi hotspots make it possible to connect to the Nintendo Wi-Fi Connection in various locations around the world. More and more establishments (such as airports, hotels and restaurants) are making Wi-Fi hotspots available to the public every day. Nintendo's recent partnership with Wayport makes the Nintendo WFC network even broader, extending free Wi-Fi service to Nintendo DS owners at more than 6,000 McDonald's® locations across the US. (For a list of participating McDonald's locations and other hotspots, visit www.nintendowifi.com.)

Hotspot and a hot burger.

For more information, go to ***nintendowifi.com***

3 Play!

So you've got a Nintendo DS, the right games and Wi-Fi access—you're ready to join the Nintendo Wi-Fi community. We've outlined some of the Wi-Fi features awaiting you in three titles that will be available before year's end.

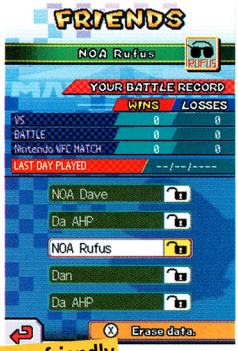
NOTE: Each Wi-Fi-compatible game card is meant to be used with a single Nintendo DS unit—you'll have to reset your Wi-Fi settings to play the game on a different DS.

Mario Kart DS

Easily the most anticipated Nintendo DS game this holiday season, Mario Kart DS connects players around the world for 24/7 four-player kart competitions.

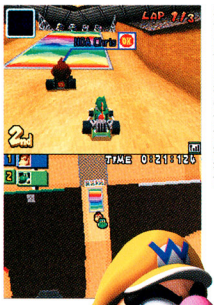
> Make Friends Around the World

Mario Kart DS allows you to store the names of 32 friends who also own the game. You can connect with up to three of those friends at once on the Wi-Fi network for a match. Adding friends to your roster is easy—either manually enter their 16-digit Friend Codes, or play a LAN match with them (at which time they'll be automatically added to your friend roster).



Get not-so-friendly with friends!

> Know Your Rivals



Mario Kart DS Wi-Fi features go beyond simply racing. The game keeps track of your wins and losses, as well as your stats from the various single-player modes. When you select Rivals mode, you'll be connected with strangers who are at a skill level comparable to yours.

For more information, go to nintendowifi.com

nintendo Wi-Fi connection

> Regional Matches

Regional mode in Mario Kart DS will connect you with players close to your location via the Nintendo Wi-Fi Connection. The game will seek out three other racers for you to play against in a full heat. Each player will receive points based on his ranking in a race. At the end of the heat, a winner will be announced.

> Show Off Your Kart Art

Mario Kart DS allows racers to create custom logos using a paint program. The logo you create will become your online calling card—not only will it show up next to your name when you connect with opponents, but it will be pasted on your kart for everyone to see.

> World Domination!

You don't need to speak the same language to enjoy a round of Mario Kart DS. In Worldwide mode, you'll be up against players from all over the world. Test your kart-racing skills against strangers in London or Kyoto!

For more information, go to nintendowifi.com

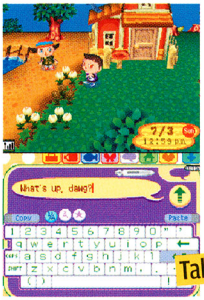
Animal Crossing: Wild World

Share your AC experience with others in the much-anticipated follow-up to the GCN favorite.

> Open the Gate!

In Animal Crossing: Wild World, your town's gate serves as a hub for Wi-Fi activity. Copper (who you may remember as the police officer from the GCN game) stands guard at the gate—you must speak with him to access the Wi-Fi features. After Copper opens the gate, up to three friends can visit your town over the Nintendo Wi-Fi Connection to trade items, talk to your neighbors or just hang out.

> Town-Hopping



In addition to opening your town gate, Copper can escort you to another town via the Nintendo Wi-Fi Connection. Visiting other players' towns allows you to meet new characters, chat with friends, leave messages on the town bulletin board and find the game's rarest items. You can visit the town of anyone on your friend roster if they've opened their town gates.

Take a walk on the wild side!

> Making Friends

Animal Crossing: Wild World is all about community. Up to 32 friends can be added to your friend roster. To add friends, you must either enter their Friend Codes manually from the Start menu or visit a town that they are in (via LAN or Wi-Fi) and add them using the in-game menu.

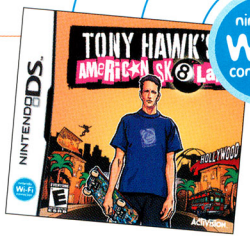
> Tag Mode

Much like Bark mode in Nintendogs, Tag mode will notify two Animal Crossing players when their Nintendo DS units are within wireless range of each other. Just select Tag mode from the Start menu and close your DS to enable Tag mode. Though the mode works only with a LAN connection, it is a great way to meet friends that you can visit later via Wi-Fi.

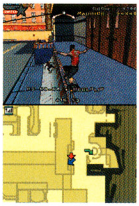
For more information, go to nintendowifi.com

Tony Hawk's American Sk8land

Skating head-to-head against friends and strangers is just one of American Sk8land's many Wi-Fi features.



> Matchmaking

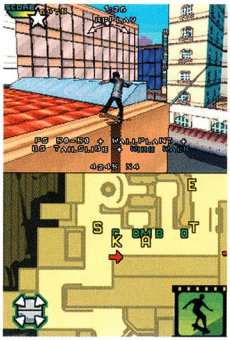


Automatch mode will randomly connect you with a stranger over the Wi-Fi network for some skating competition. Once both players are connected, you can choose from among five head-to-head modes (including Combo Mambo, Trick Attack and The Price Is Wrong) to play on any of the game's seven levels.

> Keep Your Friends Close

Like Mario Kart DS and Animal Crossing: Wild World, THAS lets you store up to 32 friends in your friend roster. To add a friend to your roster, you must enter his 16-digit Friend Code. (Friend Codes are issued to players the first time they connect to the Nintendo Wi-Fi Connection.) When you select Friend Match over the Wi-Fi network, you can challenge anyone from your friend roster to a head-to-head competition.

> Who's Your Daddy?



One of THAS's coolest Wi-Fi features is the ability to track your stats and your best runs online and compare them against the rest of the THAS community. The top runs (in both Pro and Rookie modes) are stored on the THAS online server, and are available to download and watch on your DS. When you're browsing through the scores, you can press the L Button to switch between viewing the community's best scores or your friends' best scores.

> A New Day, a New Goal

In addition to the hundreds of single-player goals available in Story and Classic modes, new goals are available to download and play over the Wi-Fi network. Developer Vicarious Visions has big plans for the downloadable goals, but they're keeping a tight lid on exactly what THAS players can expect.

Metroid Prime Hunters

Though we don't know the specifics of the Metroid Prime Hunters Wi-Fi capabilities, we do know the first-person shooter has seven bounty hunters (including Samus), each with unique abilities. How this will play out over the Nintendo Wi-Fi Connection remains to be seen.

For more information, go to ***nintendowifi.com***

nintendo Wi-Fi connection

**It's easy to connect–
we'll show you how.**

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CONTENT RATED BY ESRB
Visit www.esrb.org for updated rating information.

Shredhog

>SONIC RIDERS

PLATFORM: GCN • PUBLISHER: SEGA
DEVELOPER: SONICTEAM • RELEASE: FEBRUARY 2006

Playing to his strengths, Sega's ring leader is in a hurry that would make even Captain Falcon's head spin in hoverboard showdown Sonic Riders. The usual suspects—Tails, Knuckles and Amy Rose—join the blue blazer, along with more-obscure Sega characters such as Jet the Hawk, Storm the Albatross and Cream the Rabbit, to make a field of 16 riders. Even Aiai from the Monkey Ball series gets into the act as Eggman calls for the Ex World Grand Prix to determine who is the fastest Extreme Gear racer in the Sonic world. Is the race a front for the mad scientist's elaborate plot to grab all of the Chaos Emeralds and the storied Babylon Rogue's treasure? Probably. It's also screaming fun as the riders rip into eight tracks at sound-barrier-breaking speeds, grabbing air, grinding rails and performing board-flailing tricks that increase their speed. In a masterstroke that adds to the game's breakneck zip and to the number of riders breathing down each other's necks, boards create wind rifts—similar to a watercraft's wake—that close pursuers can ride in. It guarantees a lot of lead changes and makes it possible to go from worst to first in a matter of seconds.

Each character has attributes that contribute to one of three specialties. Sonic is a pure-speed racer who has more difficulty turning than some. Tails can hover, which allows him to reach levels that others can't. Knuckles is a power-oriented rider, which means he can push other characters out of his way with ease. All of the riders are capable of sliding into turns, executing air maneuvers and creating tornadoes that cause trouble for the racers behind them. They also can purchase new Extreme Gear with the rings they pick up to add to their specialties or to compensate for their weaknesses.

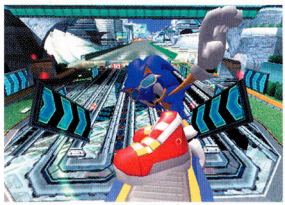
Multiplayer action is big in Sonic Riders, too, with up to four participants going at it in split-screen play, either racing or battling on their boards. Tag mode even lets partners to draft off each other in co-op challenges.

Races take place in locations that will make Sonic fans feel right at home, whether they're slaloming between cars in Metal City, skipping off the waters of Splash Canyon or soaring over the molten lava of Egg Factory. Every track has alternate routes and shortcuts that require every ounce of a rider's ability to reach—rails that one has to hook up with at the starting point and can ride on all the way to the end.

With the release of Sonic Rush and now Sonic Riders, the hurry-up hedgehog is picking up speed on Nintendo systems. Catch him while you can.
—GEORGE S.

How to grind a shortcut and look good doing it.

Sonic an Knuckles shoot the tube.



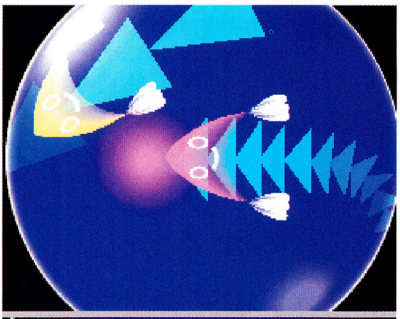
Extreme Gear racing is a contact sport.

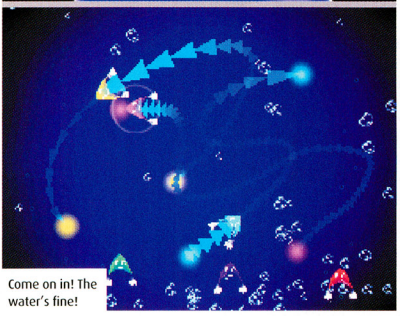
Uncharted Territory

>ELECTROPLANKTON

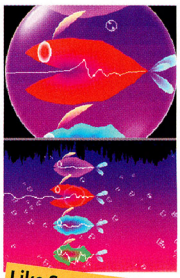
PLATFORM: DS • PUBLISHER: NINTENDO
DEVELOPER: NINTENDO • RELEASE: JANUARY 9, 2006

At its heart, Electroplankton lets you create music; the game is as much a sequencer as it is an expedition into some undiscovered depth of the ocean. Music materializes based on how you interact with wild sea creatures (Plankton), which you can manipulate in a variety of ways. Some play modes will have you stirring up clusters of Plankton using the stylus, while others require you to use your voice to get their attention. Though each of the game's 10 music-making modes is unique, they are similar in that they are strangely intuitive—so much that you'll get lost in your own curiosity and create your own objectives as you explore the game's free-form universe. But trying to explain Electroplankton in mere words is futile. Like a bizarre dream, it must be experienced to grasp its intricacies. To get your hands on the game, visit store.nintendo.com—Electroplankton will be available for purchase only online beginning January 2006. —ANDY M.

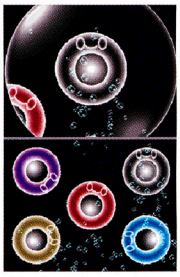




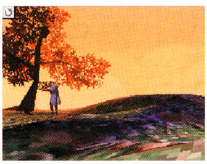
Come on in! The water's fine!



Like Sea Monkeys, but smarter.



It's a classic tale of good versus evil played out by cows in costume and heavy makeup.



Creation, evolution and huge blue beasts doing the old soft shoe.

Intelligent Design

>BLACK AND WHITE CREATURES

PLATFORM: DS • PUBLISHER: MAJESCO
DEVELOPER: FULL FAT • RELEASE: FEBRUARY 2006

If you think your Nintendogs are little monsters, wait until you get some quality time with the 10 beastly breeds of Black and White Creatures, many of which are new to the franchise that began with Peter Molyneux's PC god sim Black & White. Like those old cartoons with the angel and the devil who sit on the shoulders of a conflicted character, the DS title features in-game advisors who help you influence your creations in the direction of good (helping villagers and children with their chores) or really bad (stomping and destroying). The creatures show their personalities through a wide array of animation and graphic touches, and you show your approval or dismay through "God's Hand" stylus moves and verbal commands. You can also create custom tattoos for your beasts using the touch screen. The creature training and battling take place on eight 3-D rendered islands. —George S.

Emotion Engine

>SUPER PRINCESS PEACH

PLATFORM: DS • PUBLISHER: NINTENDO
DEVELOPER: NINTENDO • RELEASE: Q1 2006

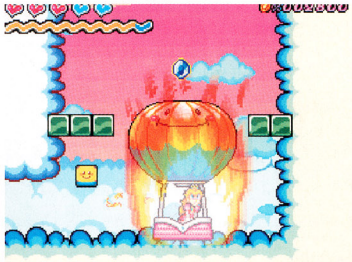
Mario has been captured. Luigi is tied up and helpless. Bowser has control of the Vibe Scepter, which he's used to throw the citizens of the Mushroom Kingdom into a state of emotional distress. What's a princess to do? Why, head to Vibe Island to save the day, of course. In Super Princess Peach, the oft-captured Mushroom Kingdom royal finally gets her chance to be the platform-action star.

Despite her highness's regal stature and frilly pink attire, Princess Peach has all the makings of a heroine. Taking a cue from the Mario Bros., she can stomp Koopas right out of their shells and break blocks with her head. Sadly, she's lost her hovering ability from her playable debut in Super Mario Bros. 2, but she does have a keen slide kick and a multi-purpose magic parasol. The parasol is used mainly for smacking foes or scooping up and hurling enemies; better yet, it can devour bad guys whole! Additionally, the parasol can be upgraded at Toad's shop, allowing Peach to glide short distances, pound the earth and even shoot energy beams.

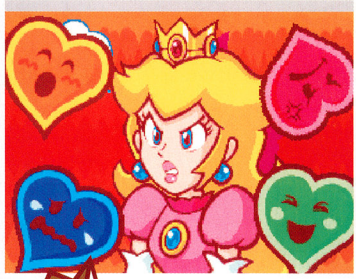
Peach's most powerful ability, however, may be the complete control that Vibe Island has given her over her emotions. At any time, Peach can unleash one of four vibe powers—Joy, Rage, Gloom or Calm—each with its own distinct uses. Joy creates a literally uplifting whirlwind that lets Peach fly through the air or clear away dust and fog; Rage surrounds her with flames, letting her burn wooden obstacles and angrily stomp the ground; Gloom causes Peach to unleash a fountain of tears that can make plants grow; and Calm allows Peach to regenerate health. The four vibes are instrumental in overcoming obstacles and defeating the game's bosses, and they're all conveniently accessible with a touch of the DS's lower screen.

To foil Bowser's plot, Peach must explore Vibe Island's eight themed worlds—plains, forests, icy mountains, a volcanic region and a haunted mansion among them—and pummel familiar enemies such as Goombas and Boos (as well as vibe-influenced variants). The princess can also access numerous minigames, including jigsaw-style puzzles (which you must find the pieces to before you can play) and several types of coin-collecting challenges. In addition, Mushroom Kingdom citizens are trapped in each level; the number Peach rescues determines the game's ending.

Princess Peach may not have as much experience as her plumber pals when it comes to defeating Bowser, but her solo adventure promises to be as deep as any other Mario-style platformer. It's not a bad thing to fight like a girl. —CHRIS H.



Mario tradition is alive and well in Super Princess Peach. Classic enemies and game mechanics abound.



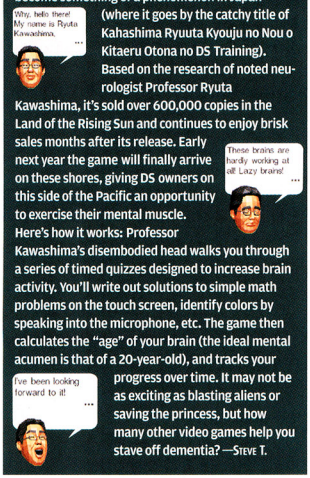
Gray Matter

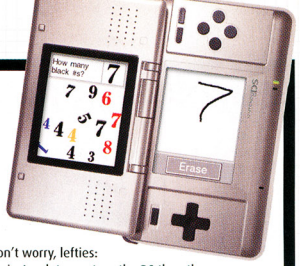
>BRAIN AGE: TRAIN YOUR BRAIN IN MINUTES A DAY

PLATFORM: DS • PUBLISHER: NINTENDO
DEVELOPER: NINTENDO • RELEASE: 2006

This quirky brain-training game has become something of a phenomenon in Japan (where it goes by the catchy title of Kahashima Ryuuta Kyouju no Nou o Kitaeru Otona no DS Training). Based on the research of noted neurologist Professor Ryuta Kawashima, it's sold over 600,000 copies in the Land of the Rising Sun and continues to enjoy brisk sales months after its release. Early next year the game will finally arrive on these shores, giving DS owners on this side of the Pacific an opportunity to exercise their mental muscle.

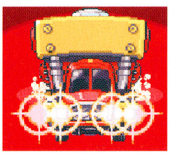
Here's how it works: Professor Kawashima's disembodied head walks you through a series of timed quizzes designed to increase brain activity. You'll write out solutions to simple math problems on the touch screen, identify colors by speaking into the microphone, etc. The game then calculates the "age" of your brain (the ideal mental acumen is that of a 20-year-old), and tracks your progress over time. It may not be as exciting as blasting aliens or saving the princess, but how many other video games help you stave off dementia? —STEVE T.

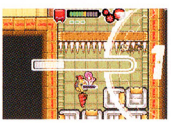




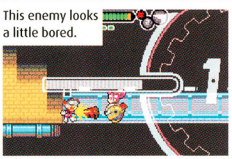
Don't worry, lefties: Brain Age lets you turn the DS the other way to cater to your bizarre mutation.

Crazy bosses will test your drilling skills.





This enemy looks a little bored.



Dig It!

>DRILL DOZER

PLATFORM: GBA • PUBLISHER: NINTENDO
DEVELOPER: GAME FREAK • RELEASE: Q1 2006

Some heroes use swords. Others fight with guns. Jill drives a mech equipped with only a big drill. It may sound weird, but the unique conveyance/weapon opens the door to some of the most innovative play mechanics to infuse a side-scrolling action game in a long time. As acting leader of the Red Dozers—a gang of good-guy thieves—Jill gets to use her drill dozer to smash enemies and bore right through solid objects: walls, dirt, desks, beds, sculptures, toilets and more. The drill dozer can also use its spinning bit to grab onto platforms, propel itself through vents, maneuver underwater, launch through the air and operate various types of equipment; the mechanic of drilling with the L or R Button is simple but very versatile (especially when it comes to the boss fights). A puzzle component also enters Drill Dozer's gameplay mix—players must acquire stronger gears in each stage before they can overpower the obstacles that bar the way. Given that Drill Dozer comes from the creators of Pokémon, it's no surprise that the game is bursting with creativity. —CHRIS H.

In the Cards

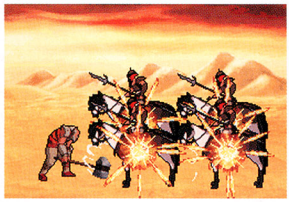
>BATTLES OF PRINCE OF PERSIA

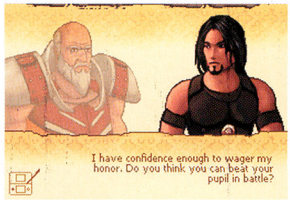
PLATFORM: NINTENDO DS • PUBLISHER: UBISOFT
DEVELOPER: UBISOFT • RELEASE: DECEMBER 2005

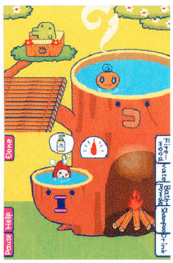
It's obvious that between The Sands of Time and Warrior Within, the Prince of Persia went through some life-changing events. His anger flared and he became ready to fight anyone in his way.

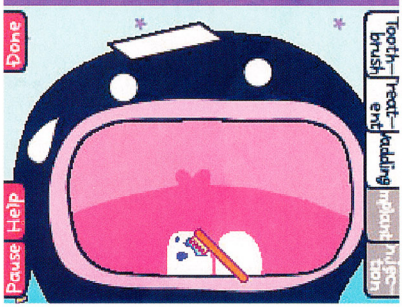
But beyond the plot and the central character, don't expect Battles of Prince of Persia to bring you more of the same game. Part trading card game and part tactics game, the innovative title mixes the two genres to create an elaborate new experience. Opponents take turns playing cards from their hand to determine how their troops will move on the battlefield. Then it's up to the player to move the units on the board. Cards also contain special skills, such as affliction spells and movement bonuses, which you can cast on your own armies or your opponents'. Each army also has an on-field general with special powers of his own, and as you play through the game, new generals will be ready to use in battle. The game is as deep and complex as it sounds—be prepared to take a few losses before you really understand what's going on. —CHRIS S.

Before you engage the enemy, consult the battle chart to see how well you're expected to fare.









Corner Shop teaches life lessons, such as when to flip pancakes to keep them from burning.

Pet Project

>TAMAGOTCHI CONNECTION: CORNER SHOP

PLATFORM: DS • PUBLISHER: BANDAI
DEVELOPER: NANA-ONSHA • RELEASE: JANUARY 2006

You can perform surgery on your Nintendo DS in Trauma Center: Under the Knife and try legal cases in Phoenix Wright: Ace Attorney, but the handheld has been sorely lacking in cake-decoration and flower-arrangement simulations. The return of Tamagotchi, the virtual pet that sold 40 million units worldwide in the mid '90s, will remedy that with a DS title that allows you to take charge of more than 10 types of businesses through touch control. In addition to running the aforementioned cake and flower services, you can operate a dental practice, a spa, a live-music establishment and more. Sporting an art style reminiscent of developer Nana-OnSha's nutty rhythm game PaRappa the Rapper, the game lets you select one of three characters—smart Mametchi, charismatic Memetchi or sweet Kuchipatchi—to front the businesses and enjoy items purchased from the profits. Clothing, home decorations and snacks are among the goods that you'll be able to acquire once the Gotchis start rolling in. Wireless features will allow you to trade your haul with other Tamagotchi Connection enthusiasts. —GEORGE S.

REVOLUTION EVOLUTION

Still trying to wrap your head around the Revolution controller? Let's look at some of its sources of inspiration.

ANALOG STICK

CONTROL
The Revolution controller promises to once again change the way we play our console games.

DIRECTIONAL PAD

AMERICAN REVOLUTION

INDUSTRIAL REVOLUTION

DANCE DANCE REVOLUTION

REVOLUTIONS
Traditionalists always fear change, but revolutions ultimately lead to better things.

NUNCHAKU

WEAPONRY
When you lose to your friends, why just throw the controller? Instead you can use it to beat them about the head and shoulders?

BIG STICK

LIGHTBULB

GREAT INVENTIONS
Every once in a while, something comes along that changes civilization as we know it.

FIRE

"Locked and loaded for a slick sequel to last year's paintball hit."
IGN.com

YES, THERE ARE FORCE FIELDS. THEY'RE CALLED BUNKERS.

PLAY 4 REAL

BUILD YOUR FIELD Place, rotate and size obstacles for an almost infinite number of field layouts, then upload and play your fields online—custom style.

CONTROL YOUR TEAM The innovative Breakout Manager lets you direct your teammates' moves and shooting—control your team, control the field.

XBOX | XBOX LIVE | GAME BOY ADVANCE | NINTENDO DS. | WXP | ACTIVISION.

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EVERYONE 10+
Mild Lyrics
Mild Violence
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EVERYONE 10+
Mild Lyrics
Suggestive Themes
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music in every direction

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TXT 2 WIN. Text in "music" to ddrkr (33757) to win games and gear.

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SEATTLE, U.S.A. - 7:36 AM This cup of coffee is almost as enjoyable as being in first place.

NEW YORK, U.S.A. - 10:36 AM 2,800 miles away, someone's about to take the lead.

behind the scenes

NINTENDO WI-FI CONNECTION

As the world waits for the Nintendo Wi-Fi Connection, hundreds of beta testers (including some NP staff members) take a test-drive through the company's first global network game service. By Andy Myers

FRANKFURT, GERMANY - 4:36 PM
On a different continent, another racer brings up the rear.

KYOTO, JAPAN - 11:36 PM A player enjoys a late-night Kart session from the other side of the world.

In August, Nintendo put out a call to its employees around the world to help the company beta-test a product that will mark a new era in gaming: the Nintendo Wi-Fi Connection. Eager to join Nintendo's network gaming service more than two months earlier than the rest of the world, some of the Nintendo Power staff, myself included, signed up for the program. At the time, Nintendo was keeping a tight lid on the specifics, so we had no idea what we were in for. Some of us were excited while others were skeptical. But we were all eager to try it out for ourselves.

And we did. We put the Nintendo Wi-Fi Connection through the wringer, playing three of its upcoming titles (Tony Hawk's American Sk8land, Mario Kart DS and Animal Crossing: Wild World) along with the rest of the beta-testing community. In addition, we tracked down some of the key players behind the Nintendo Wi-Fi Connection to gain some insider perspectives. If you're still wondering whether or not the Nintendo WFC is worth your time, take our word for it—it's off the hook.

preparing for launch

Having grown up on a steady diet of Nintendo like most others my age, I've always found it curious that Nintendo has, for the most part, stayed out of the online gaming business. Throughout video game history, Nintendo has been at the forefront of the industry, changing the way we play games. The Legend of Zelda (NES), Mario Kart (SNES) and Super Mario 64 (N64) are just a few examples of titles that have set new standards or created new genres. Why hasn't Nintendo done the same in the online market before now? Before jumping headfirst into the Nintendo Wi-Fi Connection service, I set out on a quest to answer that question. My investigation led to Darren Smith, a longtime Nintendo employee and product manager for the Nintendo Wi-Fi Connection. (Smith has worked on a number of online programs for Nintendo, dating all the way back to the NES.) His answer was simple: "[Network] gaming has been around for a long time—we just hadn't found the right point to enter the market. Wi-Fi opens up the possibility [of network gaming] for a lot of people, because it's so much easier."

> **"Wi-Fi opens up the possibility [of network gaming] for a lot of people, because it's so much easier."**
>
> —Darren Smith
> Nintendo of America

During the first phase of beta testing, we put Smith's claim to the test by connecting our Nintendo DS units via Wi-Fi to our home wireless routers. I equipped my router with up-to-date firmware, and using a test cartridge provided by Nintendo, I attempted to connect my DS to the Internet for the first time. Just as Smith professed, it was almost effortless. The cartridge ran a series of automatic tests over the network gaming service. I didn't yet have a Wi-Fi game to play, but watching the numbers spin as my DS fed information across cyberspace had me curious as to what was in store in my beta-testing future.

Q: What if I want to play games on the Nintendo Wi-Fi Connection, but I don't own a wireless router?

A: You can still play using certain Wi-Fi hotspots, including hotspots provided by Nintendo's partner, Wayport, at over 6,000 McDonald's locations in the US.

online personality

Nintendo knows that it will take more than just ease of connection to reel in gamers—it's the games and the network gaming features that will make or break the Nintendo Wi-Fi Connection. Three titles will be available near the launch of the service: Tony Hawk's American Sk8land (THAS), Mario Kart DS and Animal Crossing: Wild World. Each has its own unique Nintendo WFC features, but all three provide ways to establish an online identity, which was my first task when issued a THAS game card for phase two of the beta test. Customizing your character in THAS takes on a different light when you know that the rest of the world may see your creation. I chose a wrestling mask to maintain a certain level of anonymity, and painted my board with a 1-Up Mushroom to give my homie some personality.

what language barrier?

During the Hawk portion of the Nintendo Wi-Fi Connection beta test, players from all around North America challenged each other using the game's various head-to-head modes. I spent most of my online time playing against strangers using the Automatch function. THAS's gameplay is a lot like console Tony Hawk games, so my experience with the franchise came in handy. But my Hawk skills were put to the ultimate test when I was randomly paired with a seasoned Hawk vet (who I speculate was a member of the Vicarious Visions development team). It didn't matter that I got schooled—just experiencing the service and competing with strangers via my DS was thrilling enough.

THAS makes great use of the Nintendo Wi-Fi Connection, but it wasn't until I played Mario Kart DS that I grasped the extent of the service's power. The first time I connected Kart to the service, I was paired with fellow Nintendo employees as far away as Europe and Japan—you don't need to speak the same language to enjoy a game with others. And if you're getting pounded mercilessly by Mario Kart masters around the world, you can seek solace in Rivals mode, which will pair you up with strangers that are at a similar skill level.

All three titles offer in-game paint editors, which use the DS stylus. Each paint editor serves a different purpose, but all can help you establish your persona when playing with others across the Nintendo Wi-Fi Connection.

Q: Are there more Nintendo WFC games (other than the three covered in this article) coming out for Nintendo DS?

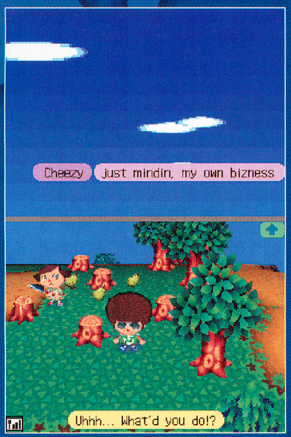
A: Yes. Metroid Prime Hunters has been confirmed as a Nintendo WFC title, and recent Wi-Fi announcements in Japan have us speculating that we'll be hearing of others very soon.

testing notes:

crossing over coffee

Until I received the testing cartridge of Animal Crossing: Wild World, I had connected to the Nintendo Wi-Fi Connection only at home or at friends' houses. Wireless gaming on a portable system has so many possibilities, and here I was sitting on the couch all day. It was high time to hit a hotspot. My first stop was a coffee shop in Seattle, WA, that advertised a free, public Wi-Fi hotspot on a sign in its window. After ordering a large extrahot split-shot soy hazelnut latte, I sat down and fired up my DS. I received an error message almost immediately. Perplexed, I noticed a sign near the register that explained that the coffee shop's wireless router uses WEP encryption, and requires a WEP key to access it. I asked the barista for the WEP key (which she gladly gives to any paying customer), and entered it manually on ACWW's Wi-Fi setup screen. My DS connected immediately, and I was able to interact with other Animal Crossing players around the country while enjoying my drink.

Later that day, I connected to the service at two other public locations that boasted free Wi-Fi hotspots. While running around from hotspot to hotspot, though, I was reminded of my conversation with Darren Smith. "What's most inviting about it is that it's very, very easy to do," Smith told me. "I mean, literally, you can walk into a McDonald's location, pop open Mario Kart, and you can play online—there's nothing to do. You select the Play Nintendo Wi-Fi Connection menu item and you're online within a few seconds. There's nothing to set up, no wires to drag around." Darren was referring in part to Nintendo's recent partnership with Wayport (which will give free hotspot access to Nintendo Wi-Fi Connection in over 6,000 McDonald's locations across the US), but he was also explaining just how well a portable game system and Wi-Fi work together. There really are very few limits.



Some people have no manners.

community service

The Nintendo Wi-Fi Connection is more than just technology. Hawk, Kart and Animal Crossing each have a community—Nintendo WFC is a means of accessing them. All three titles allow players to keep friend rosters, but each game has its own, unique community elements. Hawk, for instance, encourages players to record their best runs on any of its seven levels, then upload them to the High Scores server. If your run is good enough, it will appear on a list so other Hawk community members can watch a video clip of your feats. "Going online with your DS to watch and learn as the best players in the world lay down sick combos is just pure fun," exclaimed Dan Wallace (producer of Tony Hawk's American Sk8land) during our conversation regarding the network gaming service. And he was right—even during the beta-testing period, there were some miraculous runs available for download. (I can't wait to see the ridiculous skateboarding displays that will be available once the world has access to the service.) But you don't have to be a pro skater to enjoy the Hawk community. You can view and download the high scores only of those on your friend roster. In addition, there's a Rookie mode for Hawk newbies to compete in.

When it comes down to it, Hawk is mostly about skateboarding. Animal Crossing, however, is a community-centric game at its core. Within the AC world, you can open up your town gate and allow friends to visit your town via Nintendo WFC. This changes the game dramatically from its single-player experience, creating a socioeconomic infrastructure that lets you trade items, chat, give gifts, host fishing competitions and do about a million other things with visiting players. The title also offers nearly limitless ways to customize your character's look (my little guy currently wears an afro wig and pilot shades), which will help shape your personality as you interact with friends using the service. You'll want to be careful who you allow into your town, though—some will come only to pillage. Most players that I invited into my town were friendly, but one hoodlum stole my items and chopped down my trees. I posted a very displeased letter on his town bulletin board the next day, and promptly removed him from my friend roster.

Q: I bought my Nintendo DS almost a year ago. Will it work with the Nintendo Wi-Fi Connection?

A: Yes. Any Nintendo DS unit can connect to the service. All you need is the game, a Nintendo DS and Wi-Fi access at home or at a hotspot.

CHICAGO, U.S.A.- 2:18 PM

Nintendo sent NP designer Cory Conner to Chicago to facilitate a beta test at a McDonald's location, using a Wi-Fi hotspot and random children who happened to be dining there. The kids had a blast. Two young Kart connoisseurs in particular were wreaking havoc, teaming up against testers at NOA and giving them a run for their money.

REDMOND, U.S.A.- 8:48 AM

One Saturday morning during the beta test, NP staffer Pete Michaud was randomly paired with Hideki Konno (the creator of Mario Kart) for a round of Mario Kart DS. We won't tell you who won the epic battle, but the fact that Pete's hands were shaking with excitement didn't help his kart-racing skills.

SEATTLE, U.S.A.- 11:52 PM

Late one Friday night, I found myself hosting a game of Hawk against an unknown but worthy opponent. We ended up settling a tie-breaker in Combo Mambo mode (in which the player who scores the highest combo wins). I busted a 492,120-point combo around the perimeter of Vans skatepark, and landed it just before our two minutes were up. Before I could properly celebrate, however, my adversary's score jumped to 508,450. Well played, my anonymous friend.

it's on!

Playing with gamers across the world is a huge part of the Nintendo Wi-Fi Connection, but the experience goes beyond community interaction. After spending a significant amount of time on the service, it's easy to overlook the fact that the three Nintendo WFC-enabled games are some of the best DS single-player games to date. And the single-player experiences in all three have a major effect on Nintendo WFC multiplayer interaction, creating new ways of competing with opponents. Whether you're going for a high score in Hawk or trying to accrue more bells than your buddy in Animal Crossing, the end goal is always to improve your status in the community.

"It's great for gamers because we're just at the starting point here of what could be a whole new world for portable games."

—Dan Wallace
Vicarious Visions

Compared to Animal Crossing, the real word is so boring!

Q: Is the Nintendo Wi-Fi Connection free to use?
A: Yes. There is no subscription fee from Nintendo.

In Mario Kart's single-player mode, for instance, completing difficult objectives will earn you stars, and the number of stars that appear next to your name while playing on the Nintendo WFC service signifies your skill level. Earning stars is tough. (I encountered a player with three, and he wiped the floor with me.) Mario Kart also has an insane number of unlockable karts and characters, all of which are playable over the service—finding the rarest of these will have your rivals cursing you in envy.

Often times, you won't know that something's unlockable in Mario Kart DS until you see it on Nintendo WFC.

But Kart rivalries are just the beginning of network competitions. Animal Crossing takes a more capitalistic approach as you seek out the game's riches. Many items in the game come in sets, and certain items are incredibly difficult to find. When decorating my home in the game, I found a bird bath and a picnic table, but for the life of me I could not find a garden gnome to complete my set. After asking around in different towns over the Nintendo WFC service, I found that fellow NP crewmember Steven Grimm had an extra garden gnome in his character's inventory. I would have gladly paid him every bell to my name to acquire the ridiculous little item. After taunting me for a while using the game's chat system, Steven finally gave it up, trading the item to me for something he desired from my own inventory. What a guy.

the future of Nintendo WFC

Wrapping up the Nintendo WFC testing and turning in my games was traumatic, especially considering the progress I'd made in all three games (particularly Animal Crossing). But I'm excited to start over again, along with the rest of the world—not only with the games I've already played, but also with upcoming Nintendo WFC titles. First-person shooter Metroid Prime Hunters is sure to have a rabid following on Nintendo Wi-Fi Connection in early 2006. And as Dan Wallace said of the service: "It's great for gamers because we're just at the starting point here of what could be a whole new world for portable games."

Q: Is the Nintendo Wi-Fi USB Connector a wireless router?
A: No. It's a device that connects to a PC running Windows XP and enables the PC to share its broadband Internet connection with up to five Nintendo DS units. The device is available at store.nintendo.com, and is incredibly easy to use.

Having already experienced three very different Nintendo WFC games, I can't help but speculate on the service's future possibilities. Pikmin? Four Swords? Bomberman? These are obvious choices—how about something like WarioWare? So many franchises could translate amazingly well to the Nintendo WFC service. And knowing Nintendo, I'm sure there's some crazy new ideas in the works that will blow everyone away. "We've made it very easy for developers to integrate Nintendo Wi-Fi Connection into their games," explained Smith. "I think you'll soon see these features as common as local multiplayer modes." Smith wouldn't tell us exactly how future titles will take advantage of the powerful service, but we can't wait to find out.

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NP TOP 200

THE COUNTDOWN CONTINUES

It's the eve of the final countdown—are you playing with power?

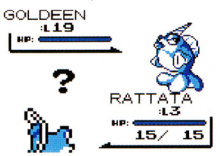
By Pete Michaud

74: YOSHI'S ISLAND: SUPER MARIO WORLD 2

Until New Super Mario Bros. hits store shelves, this beauty will reign as the last new 2-D Mario adventure—though it was mainly Yoshi's quest.

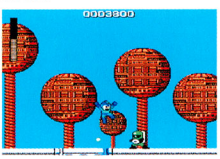
64: POKÉMON RED/BLUE/YELLOW

In spite of the sheer quirkiness of this title, Nintendo took a chance in bringing this franchise stateside. Our country has never been quite the same since.



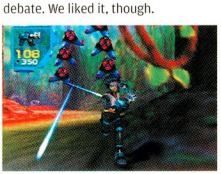
61: MEGA MAN

Early Nintendo gamers who were pining for a great experience certainly received one when Capcom's now-legendary blue-helmeted warrior graced the NES.



79: JET FORCE GEMINI

Of all the N64 Rare games, this one might be the most controversial when it comes to the "best games ever" debate. We liked it, though.



72: EARTHBOUND

It makes us sad that this was North America's first and only game in this series. Hopefully we'll see a sequel someday.

	Game Name	System	Release Date
80	Pokémon Gold/Silver/Crystal	GBC	2000/2001
79	Jet Force Gemini	N64	1999
78	Harvest Moon 64	N64	1999
77	WarioWare, Inc.: Mega Microgame$	GBA	2003
76	Final Fantasy I & II: Dawn of Souls	GBA	2004
75	SSX Tricky	GCN	2001
74	Yoshi's Island: Super Mario World 2	SNES	1995
73	Star Fox 64	N64	1997
72	EarthBound	SNES	1995
71	Blast Corps	N64	1997
70	F-Zero	SNES	1991
69	Golden Sun: The Lost Age	GBA	2003
68	Metal Gear Solid: The Twin Snakes	GCN	2004
67	Final Fantasy Tactics Advance	GBA	2003
66	Super Castlevania IV	SNES	1991
65	Conker's Bad Fur Day	N64	2001
64	Pokémon Red/Blue/Yellow	GB	1998/1999
63	Paper Mario	N64	2000
62	F-Zero GX	GCN	2003
61	Mega Man	NES	1987

73: STAR FOX 64

With this game and the N64 Rumble Pak, the force-feedback era of gaming officially began.

70: F-ZERO

Super Mario Kart delivered Mode-7 racing; F-Zero melted our faces off with it.

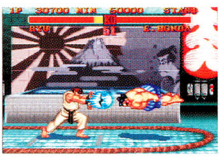
67: FINAL FANTASY TACTICS ADVANCE

This incredibly deep strategy game heralded the triumphant return of Square to a Nintendo platform.

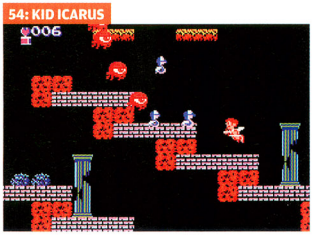
	Game Name	System	Release Date
60	Street Fighter II: The World Warrior	SNES	1992
59	Fire Emblem: The Sacred Stones	GBA	2005
58	Madden NFL 2005	GCN	2004
57	Contra	NES	1988
56	The Legend of Zelda: Link's Awakening	GB	1993
55	WarioWare: Twisted!	GBA	2005
54	Kid Icarus	NES	1987
53	Mario Kart 64	N64	1997
52	Meteos	DS	2005
51	Animal Crossing	GCN	2002

60: STREET FIGHTER II: THE WORLD WARRIOR

The fighting-game genre was born the moment this brilliantly designed game hit arcades. The SNES version brought the amazing experience home.



54: KID ICARUS



I can't tell you how much I would love to see a sequel to this game. Please, please, please.

51: ANIMAL CROSSING

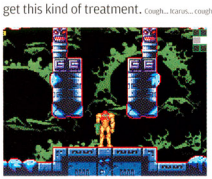
Tom Nook and Co. became cult classics on the GCN when Animal Crossing appeared in the fall of '02. We hope Animal Crossing DS follows in its footsteps.

50: PIKMIN

A new franchise from Miyamoto is always a good thing, and this one's no exception. We hope one day to direct Pikmin with the Revolution controller.

46: METROID: ZERO MISSION

This game did a beautiful job of retelling the original Samus adventure. In fact, I'd like to see other franchises get this kind of treatment. Cough... Icarus... cough.



53: MARIO KART 64

The NP crew ruled at this game. We can't wait to race you on the DS; prepare to be pummeled.

42: FINAL FANTASY: CRYSTAL CHRONICLES

If you have all the equipment to play this game four-player, it's one of the best experiences on the GCN.

45: SUPER MARIO BROS. 2

Probably the strangest of all NES Mario titles—Birdo, Mouser and Wart can help attest to that.

	Game Name	System	Release Date
50	Pikmin	GCN	2001
49	Final Fantasy	NES	1990
48	The Legend of Zelda: Four Swords Adventures	GCN	2004
47	Pikmin 2	GCN	2004
46	Metroid: Zero Mission	GBA	2004
45	Super Mario Bros. 2	NES	1988
44	Super Mario RPG: Legend of the Seven Stars	SNES	1996
43	Resident Evil	GCN	2002
42	Final Fantasy: Crystal Chronicles	GCN	2004
41	Fire Emblem	GBA	2003

5 Most Influential Games of All Time

5. Tetris
Russian native Alexey Pajitnov created this game from scratch while at work. Falling blocks are now synonymous with puzzle games.

4. Pokémon Red & Blue
Pre-1998, there were roughly five Americans who had heard of Pokémon. In 2005, there are only five Americans who haven't.

3. Super Mario 64
Mario changed the face of 3-D gaming in 1996, not content with having already revolutionized 2-D play in 1985.

2. The Legend of Zelda
Zelda delivered an experience unlike anything else in its day—you can see the influence of this gold cartridge on many a game even today.

1. Super Mario Bros.
SMB defined the way the world played games for an entire decade, if not forever.

We'll never truly know how important this game was to our industry.

INSIDE ZELDA

NINTENDO POWER'S MONTHLY CHECK-IN FROM THE ZELDA DEVELOPMENT TEAM.

(Part 8)

SEEING THE SIGHTS IN HYRULE

ATSUSHI MIYAGI | NINTENDO | KYOTO

In previous months, Inside Zelda has revealed the surprising dynamics behind Link's design and the wide range of NPCs that will populate Twilight Princess, but the characters all need a stage on which to play out their story. That brings us to landscape designer Atsushi Miyagi. His aim is to make your jaw drop when you see his vistas and environments, and his philosophy roots every visual knockout in the gameplay. While you're hacking, slashing and dashing through Hyrule, you might take your focus off the background, but the relationship between you, Link and the landscape is much more intimate than you might think. Miyagi ventures into his own background to reveal where his design philosophy turned a corner—and he reveals the fascinating places where he finds inspiration.

Cultural Shift

Long before I started work on Twilight Princess, and long before I even joined Nintendo, my head was in a very different place as a creative person. After I graduated from my university, where I studied fine art, I wanted nothing else from life than being a professional painter. So I wanted to devote all of my time to my craft. I took only contract jobs and aimed to cut down working hours so that I could paint and draw. But then something rocked my world. I happened across a magazine article about one of the major Japanese role-playing video games, and that article featured much of the game's artwork. It suddenly hit me: Art talent was not only *finding* work in video games; that's where true artistry was actually *thriving*. In those days, I didn't have much knowledge about computer graphics, except a vague notion that they were used to artful effect in Hollywood movies like *The Terminator* and *Jurassic Park*. Other than that, I only knew that I needed to express myself in the Japanese gaming industry.

During the time that I worked for several game companies, mainly as a graphic artist, a burning question was working itself out in my mind: What is the true meaning of graphics in a game? Coming from a fine-art background, I was well aware that oil paintings, which I'd studied in school, were mainly destined for display on museum walls to be stared at by people, or for being traded among an elite group of consumers. But game graphics, I realized, were in a different world. For regular Joes. For gamers. And what should this kind of art be like? I eventually reached the conclusion that game graphics were nothing if they weren't synchronized with gameplay. That realization led me down the road to where I am today, working on Twilight Princess as a landscape designer. This role creates the design of geography and outside environments, such as the ground, towns, mountains, rivers and castle exteriors. While dungeon design is often part of this job, the Twilight Princess creative staff separates these into two teams. I'm in charge of the field-design team. After studying the overall game design, our team creates the appropriate images that live within that philosophy. In many instances, I participated in that very early game-development phase, where I shared some ideas from a visual perspective. Now that we're deep into the project, sometimes we envision new possibilities, and we feel free to bring those into the larger picture for consideration by the game designers and programmers.

While people might think that creating graphics is the toughest part of my job, what's far more difficult is to adapt our landscape designs to changes in the overall game plan. When you're playing a game, these changes aren't exactly obvious. For example, if the game needs a certain new kind of enemy

Atsushi Miyagi is serious about examining the artistry of visual expression—to the extent that he's even painted a portrait of himself painting a self-portrait!

I eventually reached the conclusion that game graphics were nothing if they weren't synchronized with gameplay.

In 2-D Mario games, the hero reaches new heights via blocks; in Super Mario Sunshine, Miyagi had new solutions.

Miyagi didn't want the tunnels in Pikmin 2 to feel dark, so he brought many natural elements underground.

character, which always brings new programming challenges, we designers may need to rethink the landscape. I might have been conjuring square or triangular houses, but suddenly the new enemy might need a circular shape for its gameplay. The back and forth is sometimes a headache, but ultimately the gameplay is the most important consideration. Thus, the round house wins out.

The Lay of the Land

During the five years that I've been working for Nintendo, I've worked on Super Mario Sunshine, The Legend of Zelda: The Wind Waker and Pikmin 2, which each featured very different landscapes, all of them boldly imagined. Super Mario Sunshine was a fascinating project. The early direction was that the game ought to have a natural look. Yes, the game would have much fantastic detail, but all of its images and objects had to be grounded in the real world. Now here's the conundrum: In a 2-D Mario game, it doesn't look strange to see bricks floating in midair. But in that 3-D Mario game, we didn't want to have a big pile of blocks defying gravity in the middle of a town, for instance. I had to wrap my mind around all sorts of design puzzles like that. Bianco Hills was my favorite landscape to create, since I needed to go back and forth with many possibilities before I came up with the perfect environment.

In our creative processes, sometimes inspirations strike like lightning, and other times we have a general sense of what we want to do, but not a single concrete notion about how to get there. In Pikmin 2, for instance, everyone agreed that we wanted *something* to be crushed when the player tossed a lot of Pikmin on top of it, and we initially fixated on it being a piece of wood. We weren't satisfied with that, but we knew that we couldn't dwell on it. We needed to move ahead with other designs, so we put the problem on a shelf. That's always a danger, right there. What happened was that by the time we got back around to resolving the crushable-object question, we had wood scattered elsewhere on the gameplay landscape. We changed the object to a paper bag, and that's how those ended up in the final game. Two more notions that really affected the landscape of Pikmin 2: Because players went under the earth to treasure-hunt, I had to design an underground space; but since my work tends to bury my head in a PC all day long, I didn't like the feeling of crawling around a dark area. So I designed some underground zones to have a connection to the world above, such as one "subterranean jungle" made of concrete and sand, where I let some natural light break through a slit in the ceiling and let some grass appear down below. And then for some above-ground areas, I wanted to have places that felt rejuvenating; so that's why you see areas where cherry blossoms carpet the earth.

These dynamics extend to Zelda development, as well. For example, if the overall game plan says that wood can burn, then we need to keep wood in mind when we design landscapes, since everything that we design as wood-based—including houses—has to be burnable. So then we're asked to provide some wooden fences that can be burned by the fiery arrows; that is, the fence can't be destroyed until the player finds the fire bow. Ah, but from another direction we've heard that bombs can obliterate trees. So then we hit a potential snag: Can the wooden fence, made from trees, be destroyed by bombs, too? At the outset of a project, you never know when these enigmas will pop up, and sometimes we can't move development ahead until we resolve them. In many cases, we do leave those as open questions and tie them up later. Ultimately, which landscape

For the public's first look at the new Zelda game in 2004, Miyagi applied his intense touch to all of the environments seen in the trailer.

Who will say where a journey will lead you if you keep your eyes and mind open?

In Wind Waker, the Tower of the Gods loomed above the sea like a mystery waiting to be cracked—Miyagi's doing.

elements are tethered to the gameplay, and which are simply for atmosphere? The question emerges constantly.

My first stab at the Zelda series was on Wind Waker. The exterior architecture of Ganon's Tower, the Tower of the Gods and the courtyard in Hyrule Castle were my doing. Then for Twilight Princess, I joined the process when we were working out the landscape rules with character designers. As it turns out, I also created almost everything you saw in the E3 demo, which drew upon some of those ground rules. While Twilight Princess often has a dark, sad feeling, that's not always the case. Take the horseback riding, for instance, which is very intense—we really had to think about the landscape design. Even when speeding across Hyrule Field, Link is still constantly surrounded by majestic details that evoke an epic experience.

In my opinion, it's important to maintain the Legend of Zelda series at the top of the fantasy genre. Since many of the key people on the Twilight Princess team experienced development on Ocarina of Time, it's totally natural from them to be conscious of the Ocarina world as they work on the new game. But I'm trying not to let myself be too trapped by Ocarina standards. I feel like game development always moves in its own way, like a living creature. So, as for where the Twilight Princess vision will carry us, I can't say until it's taken us there.

Some may think that there's a perfect game-development plan that exists in which every single detail is nailed down before development ever starts. If you compared it to a movie, that would be like having complete dialog and complete casting just before the camera rolls. Everything's perfect, but what happens if the main actor is injured? The whole plan is in jeopardy and the movie may never be filmed or released. In game development, we must be open to trial and error from multiple directions; if we try to plan everything so it's always perfect on all fronts, we'll never get the game finished.

The Landscape of His Mind

Travel has influenced me greatly, and I've traveled to many places. Once I went to Europe for several months and did nothing but visit museums and study ancient ruins. On another trip, I visited New York with the intention of viewing 20th-century art, but after I found that the city's atmosphere didn't agree with me for some reason, I instead found myself wandering down to Mexico for a long time just to study the ancient Mayan ruins. Who can say where a journey will lead you if you keep your eyes and mind open? Long ago, I dreamed of minimizing my work overtime and pursuing a career as a painter, but look where that led me. Yes, I sometimes get a little jealous when I think of my friends who've made it as painters, but I never regret where life has taken me. There are many rooms ahead of me, so to speak; I can fill them all with ever-higher creative achievements.

And still life's journey opens my eyes in new ways, now that I'm spending much time with my two-year-old son and not traveling so much lately. While travel used to expose me to new influences, now it's spending time with my kid, who shows me how to be amazed by very ordinary things. He'll feel joy simply when a train is passing by. And in game development, I think that it's extremely important to look at ordinary things in a way that's easy for everyone across the world to understand. In fine art, creations are often founded on the strong ego and unique vision of the artist; and if the viewer comes from a different nationality or culture, it forces him to study the dynamics in the artist's head to understand the intention. Very egocentric, and not very helpful to the viewer. I would now prefer to discover something from everyone's ordinary life and elevate it into something that amazes people. How does that translate to gameplay and game development? That's a difficult question, but one that's worth exploring.

My feelings about travel and journeying have a direct bearing on my thoughts about Twilight Princess. The player needs to be impressed and constantly surprised as he travels through Hyrule, which is so enormous in the upcoming game. Also, I think that we need to always keep a certain tension in the air, or else players risk getting that creeping sense of dullness. But I'm scouting the horizons of Twilight Princess, looking for ways to amaze and inspire fans, and to see the Legend of Zelda world in ways that will take them to places they never thought possible.

While travel used to expose me to new influences, now it's spending time with my kid, who shows me how to be amazed. . . .

In this game if you're not kicking the ball, it's kicking you.

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Get a Real Life

Daily grind got ya down? Authority figures crushing your will? Get away from it all—far, far away via Wi-Fi—in a land like no other in Animal Crossing: Wild World on the DS.

By Steven Grimm

We feel for you. No matter who you are on this planet—whether you're dealing with school, putting up with a job or coping with home life—your fabulous personality gets dialed down a little more every day, doesn't it? Maybe that's what explains the magnetism that's drawn millions of GCN gamers to Animal Crossing. It's the *exact opposite*. Each day, players who step into AC's high-color, high-energy, high-imagination world get *louder*. In a real-time game that runs 24/7, and 365 days a year, that volume eventually grows to rock-concert levels. Now with a fantastically rethunk DS game returning to the land of smarty-panted animals, you can finally make your own escape from Planet Drab to Planet Fab. But what's the *new* Animal Crossing like? Join us for a walk on the wild side.

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EVERYONE
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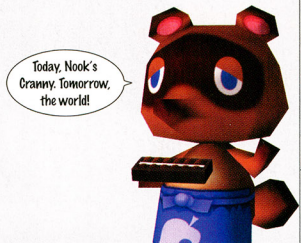
CONTENT RATED BY ESRB

Move Up, But Never Sell Out

Had it with selling your soul? Relocate to a better world.

Who's the boss of you? In real life, the answer sucks 99 times out of 100. But when you move to an Animal Crossing town, each of which is unique in the world, you're the boss. So you can finally sleep late and live large. Making it big does take time, but everyone starts on an even playing field: no cash, a wee house and nothing inside worth mentioning, except a crappy tape deck. And all newcomers are saddled with a mortgage, but it's stress-free: pay only if you wanna (though it is the only way to expand your pad).

Where's all the cash come from? Money doesn't grow on trees, but it comes pretty close—whatever rings your bell in AC (fishing, bug hunting, digging up treasure or a billion other diversions), it just seems to fall into your lap. You'll sometimes get something better: *stuff*. There's more stuff in AC than at the Mall of America, but only a handful is available each day, so it's all rare. Shopkeeper Tom Nook, a raccoon with plans to expand his shack into a megastore, knows how to keep customers on the hook. Want to be a big shot? Simple. Just take it easy in AC; play a little each day.



Stylus Is a Sweeter Ride

If you're already an AC fan, you want to know what's different this time around. From the moment you start playing Wild World, one change is obvious: it's easier to live AC via the stylus. Some players ignored some parts of the last game, such as typing letters to mail to neighbors, since it took too long with analog control and buttons, (that's an option in the DS game, in case you prefer it). Your character will follow wherever you point and will dash to reach the stylus tip if it's farther away.

Using tools is just as easy. With fishing rod in hand, you'll tap the water to cast a line, then tap again when a fish is on the hook.

Wild World adds a view of the sky that changes with the time of day and holds its fair share of aerial surprises, and the game includes a new tool to help you probe its mysteries: the slingshot. Once it's equipped, you'll tap to fire a pellet straight upward.

Menu systems are all stylus-driven this time around. In the GCN game, selecting the day's load of fish, bugs and whatever else to sell at the store took a little work; on the DS, you'll drag items from your inventory to the sell list, a far faster way to do business with Nook.

Downtime Happens Upstairs

In the GCN game, you had to make your way to your front porch to save. Now you'll hop into bed upstairs instead. Or just push the Start Button—even easier.

HAPPY HOLIDAYS!
Welcome to Animal Crossing
Wild World
nintendo Wi-Fi connection

SEASON'S GREETINGS!
Welcome to Animal Crossing
Wild World
nintendo Wi-Fi connection

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It Doesn't Bite to Make Buds

The animals in Wild World are starved for attention.

Tigers maul you, horses kick you in the chops and octopi choke you with tentacles—in the real world. But not in Animal Crossing, where the only thing the creatures kill you with is kindness. If they're feuding among themselves, which happens often in this latest game, they might tear *each other* apart with gossip. But you? You're golden—at least until you insult the critters' taste in clothing, open their mail or stand 'em up for a date. Even then, they're pretty forgiving. You'll feel like a celeb, since the inhabitants will throw open the doors of their lives to you, and pry into yours constantly. Like socializin'? There's almost no end to the citizens' blabbing. But if you're more of a doer, not a talker, they'll also ask you to complete jobs and get wrapped up in their obsessions (an extensive new part of AC). Either way, you'll be doing stuff *for* them, so they'll end up giving stuff—or cash—to you. Yet each town is more than just a handful of neighbors; it also has institutions that you'll likely visit each day. You'll often hit the pelican-managed town hall that doubles as a bank, and a huge museum (it dwarfs the GCN version's) that's run by an owl who'd love to get his talons on your precious stuff rather than see you sell it to Nook. But you have the central role: every animal wants a piece of you.

Zoo Crew: Larger than Life

Don't worry. Lucky, the puppy who was bandaged from head to paw, plus many other faves from the GCN game are in Wild World, and they're joined by many new dudes and dudettes. Every neighbor in the game has entirely new dialog on the DS. Pour an extra glass of milk, because it'll be shooting out of your nose every 10 minutes. It's beyond funny.

Tap-Dancing on the Keys

The in-game keyboard gathered dust on the GCN, but the touch-peck DS keys are a snap. Since animals still love to get mail (and they still know if you're typing gibberish), it makes it much easier to exploit the "send-mail, get-gifts" system.

Animal Distraction

Animals no longer simply send you on one delivery job after another. They now have more-specific goals. Each neighbor is nuts about fashion, insects, fossils or other stuff and will ask you to share in his obsessions. It's up to you whether you care to.

Put Words in Their Mouths

'Sup, dawg! Did you like typing phrases for animals to close their sentences with? In the DS game, they'll also ask you for openers.

Starbucks, Meet the Museum

Want some coffee with your museum? Or an observatory? The curator's sister, Celeste, lets you design your own constellations, while a very odd pigeon, Brewster, runs a cafe in the basement.

No One's Afraid of Change

No small-town thinking! Just open-mindedness, 24/7.

The world doesn't stand still in Animal Crossing. Hour after hour, neighbors go about their business; day by day, the town changes as critters move in (or out); week by week, nature takes on a new face as trees, flowers and weeds grow. But *you're* the biggest catalyst for change. By using the tailor's paint program, you can create patterns or grab premades to slap on your back. Wanna be a pirate? The Terminator? The Grim Reaper? Swanky, silky or freaky? Your call. If you can't buy it, design it yourself, then purchase headgear to complete your look. Neighbors can adopt your fashions, so you might spark a craze. On a larger scale, you can alter the landscape by sticking patterns on the ground, a big change for AC. Want the town to look like a moonscape or a cityscape? Or would you rather cover it in bling or tattoos? Go there. AC also invites you to change the world in other ways: ax trees or plant orchards; compose the town tune that pops up all over; send patterns up the flagpole; and (sweet chaos!) ask other players to live in your house and bring their own visions to town.

Paint Stroke of Genius

The DS version of AC benefits hugely from stylus-driven painting, which speeds creation to such an extent that you'll find it hard to stop making patterns. With a variety of tools, plus 16 color palettes to choose from, any pattern you can dream up nearly jumps into your DS.

The Metrosexual Touch

At a certain stage of your town's growth, the new hair-stylin' spot will open up, and the poodle Harriet can help find the right 'do for you. Before she works her magic, Harriet will ask you questions to get at the root of your personality. Depending on who you really are, she'll hook you up with the right look. Buzz cuts, bobs, spikes, fauxhawks and other styles—all in a range of hues like red, green and silver—are just some of the possibilities!

Improved Curb Appeal

Players with a green thumb rejoice: Wild World offers more types of flowers, plus a new watering can to keep gardens vibrant.

Four Players, One House!

Like in the GCN game, four players can share a town. But on the DS, they'll share the same house. One rises while others slumber. They'll share the mortgage and the living space. Although the crib can get crowded, each player gets storage for up to 90 items—a massive DS addition.

Breaking Up Isn't Hard to Do

Players who want to live in a town on a different copy of AC no longer need to say goodbye to their character. In the DS game, you can port them to other towns. Many (but not all) possessions travel with you, and the game helps you weigh the pros and cons of a move.

Celebrities Spread the Love

VIPs give you the time of day, plus more, when they visit.

You're the main attraction, but marquee names also swing through town, making friends, making trouble or making money. These critters have unique roles, such as returning mutt K.K. Slider, who made the exclusive list of Nintendo cult faves with his howl-punctuated jams and the music tapes he'd leave behind for collectors (who could stalk K.K. for months and still not have the entire library). A few VIPs come every week (you'll be able to set your clock by K.K.), but some major playas swing through on their own schedule. If you play often and keep your ear to the ground, you may bump into most of them over a few months. It often pays off, though in some cases (like that of returning VIP, Crazy Redd) it's important to be as sly as a fox to get the upper hand. Many players entered his black-market tent in the GCN game, and learned that they could walk away ripped off or carry off some ultrarare stuff. *Buyer beware*: now that CrazyRedd has an expanded role, he's . . . crazier. No matter which VIPs drop by, you'll be won over by their sudden presence, if not the *presents* some give away, since some of the game's coolest and strangest commodities are brought in by VIPs. The most bizarre? Accident insurance—one of many new things players can buy in Wild World.

Wendell's Hunger for Design

The starving walrus artist, Wendell, traded you fish for his carpets last time around; this time he'll give you unique patterns to add to your stash.

Joan's Stock of Turnips

The DS game brings back the stock-market gameplay that centers on the white turnips that the boar Joan carries. Buy low, sell high—that's the challenge. Now she also sells red turnips that you must plant and water to raise their value. Miss a day, however, and they're ruined.

Are You Terrified of Life?

Then does insurance salesman Lyle have a great deal for you! But the devil's always in the details, so think twice before you sign up.

Pascal Goes with the Flow

World-hopping Gulliver washed ashore in the last game; now it's a creature with deep thoughts (and pockets) that comes on the tide.

Dr. Shrunk Gets Emotional

Animals in AC wear their many emotions on their sleeves. When happy, they radiate flowers; when angry, steam shoots from their heads. And due to the pioneering work of the traveling therapist, Dr. Shrunk, players can finally tap into emotional states as well. Quite literally—since every time the slightly loony salamander rat passes through town, he'll add a new emotion to your keyboard.

Holidays Aren't Hellidays

All the fun. None of the pain. AC does the seasons justice.

Throw a dart at a calendar—you'll surely hit a real-life holiday that's been ruined by a family grinch. But in Wild World, as seasons pass in real time, special events and holidays meet your highest expectations. Events tend to celebrate creative expression and competition rather than mimic North American holidays like the GCN version did. On the bimonthly La-Di-Day, for example, critters get all *American Idol* on you and perform songs, hoping you'll select one as the town tune. Neighbors spread the mood better on the DS than they did on the GCN, no longer huddling at a central spot, but instead running through town, totally hopped-up on the holiday vibe. In the Fishing Tourney and the Bug-Off, for instance, all are on the prowl for the largest specimens, and they jabber about little else. Some favorite events and holidays from the previous game, such as the New Year's Eve countdown, and the wintry days that see a frosty visitor roll into town, join a host of new events that will get people talking—and not in that vicious way that's sabotaged many a special day in the real world.

Flea Market Causes Buzz

In the DS game, critters take a strong interest in seeing what's in your house, and vice versa. But on flea market days, stuff obsession becomes official, as everyone hops from house to house in search of good bargains.

Yay Day Spreads Cheer

On the new Yay Day, animals want their heads filled with compliments, and—with the keyboard—you can oblige. Then they'll regurgitate your praise all day.

The Corniest Festival Ever

Some special events, as in the GCN game, send you on foraging missions throughout town. In exchange, you'll get theme furniture for your pad. During the new Acorn Festival, you'll scavenge for all the acorns you can find, then give them to a bizarre creature that will give you shroomy stuff in return.

The Tournament of Roses

Since gardening is a more-developed hobby in the DS game, the Flower Fest each spring puts every citizen's efforts on display. The best garden nabs a special prize.

Every Day's a Shocker with Wi-Fi

Every date on the calendar is as nuts as a national holiday.

Ponder this: By the end of '05, Wild World will fuse a realm of AC players via LAN and the Nintendo Wi-Fi Connection. But what will AC look like by the end of '06, given that millions of do-it-your-way players will be visiting each other's towns? It boggles the mind.

DS to DS: Coming and Going

Up to four players can play together via local DS-to-DS connection or Nintendo Wi-Fi Connection when each has his own game card and DS system. In DS-to-DS play, one player acts as the host and invites up to three other nearby players to visit his town. To start hosting, you'll ask gatekeeper Copper to open your town gate, then the other players will ask their gate guards to search for all nearby towns that have open gates. Copper will list every open town in local range. Once a player chooses his final destination, he'll walk out of his gate and into the hosting town. Want to visit other towns instead of host? Ask another nearby player to open his gates instead.

Wi-Fi: Friends Are the Key

Playing with others via Nintendo Wi-Fi Connection is very similar to DS-to-DS play: one player hosts; three visit. But the host and visitor need to exchange friend codes first. You can get your code by connecting to the Nintendo Wi-Fi Connection then asking Copper for it. Then when visiting with others during DS-to-DS play, you and your friend can add each other to your friend rosters by opening the roster menu, then tapping each other's name. When not meeting a friend in a town, you can both add each other to your rosters by exchanging friend codes over e-mail or the phone, then typing them manually.

When Players Collide!

Meeting via Wi-Fi and LAN is a revolutionary shift. In the original AC, you could go to other towns (after a long process), but you couldn't meet players—only the in-game neighbors. Meeting and chatting with other players makes Wild World more dynamic.

No matter where the players stand in a town, you'll still see their comments when they use their chat programs. But if you want to use or see the full effect of the emotions that Dr. Shrunk teaches players to radiate, you'll need to get up close and personal.

The ways that players socialize, strategize, swap ideas and fraternize will be more unpredictable than a house party that's off the hook. We won't even hazard a guess. But we expect an invitation.

Surprising Waves of Change

As you travel, your wake spreads change that hits both towns. For example, animals may swap towns and take their stuff with them.

Traveling animals also take their memories of players as they move around the AC world and blab about them to anyone who'll listen.

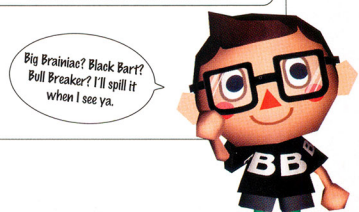
And they'll spread the styles (visual and verbal) that they picked up, plus show off mail. The content-migration potential is huge.

Tag Mode: The Ripple Effect

Even when you don't visit via Nintendo WFC or LAN, you can cause changes in other towns via wireless Tag mode. If you prep a bottled letter (buying the bottle, typing a letter then throwing it in the water), then leave your game in "sleeping" Tag mode, the bottle will wash ashore in another town that's also in Tag mode. You never know what player you pass on the street might receive the bottle, which not only will hold your message but may also release one of your town's constellations or even a traveling neighbor (at some later date). And who knows what could happen if the bottle is left undiscovered? It may wash back out to sea again—via Tag mode—and appear in a third village instead....

Wi-Fi Gets Even Wilder

As Nintendo Power goes to press, more Wi-Fi features are still under consideration for Animal Crossing: Wild World. We'll have more on the extras in the next issue; for breaking details, stay glued to the Nintendo Wi-Fi Connection website, which will also help you get connected to the Animal Crossing community easily—at home or out and about.



You've Got a Bright Future

Most games get exhausted, but AC keeps up with you.

Prepare to become obsessed. Millions who lived AC on the GCN can vouch that no matter what your addiction, AC will continue to feed it as months (and real-time *years*) go by. If it's home makeovers you crave, you'll be questing far and wide to complete AC's many matching furniture sets and the thousands of items that let you constantly reinvent your pad. Love the outdoors? Catching every kind of bug and fish or digging up all of the earth's treasures takes seasons of play. Want to nail AC's coveted rewards, such as the golden shovel? You'll need to be truly devout, pulling off miracles like filling the museum's galleries to the rafters. Or do you want to meet every one of the animal neighbors that migrate from town to town? Travel often, because it'll take years for them all to come to you. For many, however, their fascination is going to hinge on a new, radical dynamic: players connecting to other players. It's going to power a world of spontaneous content and communication for years to come. But what will grab you? Let us know when we see you around town.

Supersize My Manor

Every time you pay off your mortgage, Tom Nook will offer to expand your house until it reaches its ultimate size, which is much larger than in the GCN game.

On Your Menu Today . . .

As you catch bugs and fish, they'll be cataloged in new menu systems that give you helpful facts, such as when it's best to catch each type again.

At Long Last, You're Golden

There are more ultimate rewards in Animal Crossing: Wild World than before, such as the returning golden shovel, which isn't just a blingy tool; it's got true power.

32 Best Friends?

You can add up to 32 people to your friend roster, but will all of them be worthy to be included in your Animal Crossing posse? It'll take time to finesse your list—adding people, deleting people—but over many months of Animal Crossing travel, you'll surely find the 32 friends that are best for you.

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nintendo Wi-Fi connection

DRIVEN TO SUCCEED

Strap on your helmets—the new **Mario Kart DS** is set to take you for a wild ride.

By Chris Shepperd

Few franchises are as well-known as Mario Kart. Since the way-back days of the Super NES, Mario Kart titles have drawn more gamers from more corners of the world than virtually any other franchise in video game history. Now the series kicks into high gear with Mario Kart DS. And thanks to the Nintendo Wi-Fi Connection, you'll be able to race anywhere, anytime with anyone you please (see the Wi-Fi booklet for details). This month, we'll get you up to speed on the game's many features, including new tracks, battle arenas and secret characters.

EVERYONE E CONTENT RATED BY ESRB

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Two Killer Bs

Two new items make their way into Mario Kart DS, and both are derived from enemies found in the original Super Mario Bros. for NES. Their ancestry may be 20 years old, but the attacks can cause a brand-new type of on-the-track havoc.

Blooper

With Mario Kart DS, everyone plays on his own screen, which makes it much easier to play, right? The new Blooper attack takes away this advantage by covering a player's screen with inky black blotches. The best way to deal with a Blooper attack is to navigate by the map on the bottom screen—it's not perfect, but it will keep you out of most trouble. Also, avoid tricky maneuvers like Power Slides when you've been splotched to keep from missing turns.

Bullet Bill

There's nothing worse than being at the back of the pack and, despite your best driving, being unable to catch up. Thankfully, the new Bullet Bill item can fire you right back into the thick of things. When you use the item, you will not only rocket forward into the race, but also bowl over any cars you encounter. Bullet Bill won't always take you to the front of the field, but it will definitely give you a fighting chance of making it to the podium.

Legacy Hardware

Many of the tried-and-true items of old have returned to Mario Kart DS (see the box below). The terrifying Boo returns after an absence from Mario Kart: Double Dash!! With it, you can steal items from another racer, as well as become invisible for a short while.

Green Shells
Red Shells
Spiny Shells
Mushrooms
Super Mushrooms
Bananas
Banana Bunches
Super Stars
Lightning Bolts
Boos
Fake Item Boxes

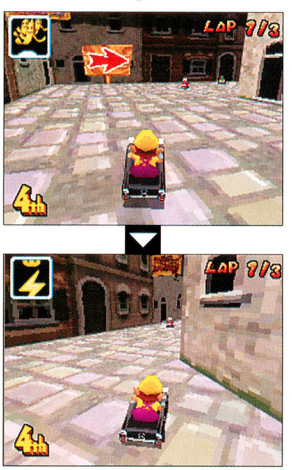
Behind the Wheel

You'll need superior driving skills to get you where you want to go. A new technique as well as some classic Mario Kart maneuvers will have you whipping around the track, and your opponents, in no time flat.

Drafting

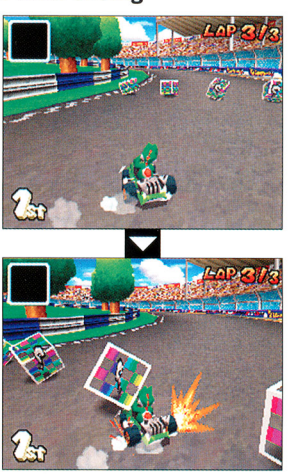
If you can stay right behind another vehicle for a couple of seconds, a blue halo will form around your head and you will get a minor boost. But be careful—the opponent you're tailing could have an item in store for tailgaters.

Jump-Turning



As you approach a sharp turn, press and hold the R Button to start drifting. When you release R, you'll snap forward in the direction your car is facing. It's a fast and safe way to whip around tight corners.

Power Sliding



While you perform a drift, quickly press left and right several times on the Control Pad. When orange sparks fly from your wheels, let go of the R Button to get a monster boost. Try to perform it multiple times in the same corner.

Grand Prix Races

Nitro Grand Prix

All of the tracks in the Nitro Grand Prix are new to Mario Kart DS. The Mushroom Cup and Flower Cup are unlocked from the start; place first in both cups to unlock the Star Cup, then win the Star Cup to open the Special Cup.

Mushroom Cup

Featuring quick laps and smooth turns, the Mushroom Cup makes for an easy introduction to kart racing.

FIGURE-8 CIRCUIT

Like the name suggests, this track is in the shape of an eight. Stay alert for items on the straightaways.

YOSHI FALLS

Watch out for the waterfalls that wash over the lower ring of the track—they'll sweep you off the edge.

LUIGI'S MANSION

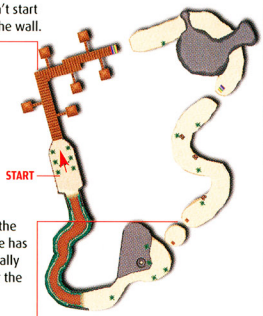
Use Power Slides to boost through the swampy forest in the back half of this long track.

CHEEP CHEEP BEACH

Cheep Cheep Beach is marked with sweeping turns and big jumps. Clean cornering and well-timed item use are paramount.

Right Angle

The first corner is a good place to practice your Jump Turn. Don't start too late—you'll smack into the wall.



The Tide Is High

Use small jumps only when the water level is high. If the tide has receded, the jumps will actually be slower than crossing over the exposed land.

Flower Cup

Intricate courses and environmental enemies abound in the Flower Cup—practice your advanced driving techniques at every opportunity.

DESERT HILLS

Fireballs, Pokeys and many Item Boxes dot Desert Hills' bumpy and banked landscape.

DELFINO SQUARE

Use a Mushroom to boost over the canal and shortcut the bridge just after clearing Delfino Square's city streets.

SHROOM RIDGE

Sideswipe opponents into oncoming traffic while navigating the twisting Shroom Ridge.

WALUIGI PINBALL

Power Slide frequently to score a good time on the winding Waluigi Pinball track. It's a long one—stay focused from the beginning to the end.

Feel the Steel

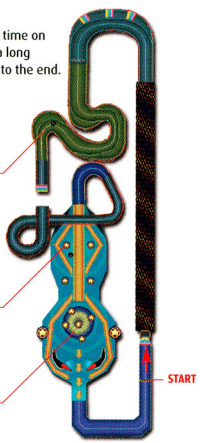
Watch out for pinballs that shoot down the track. It's best to stick near the track's edge to avoid them.

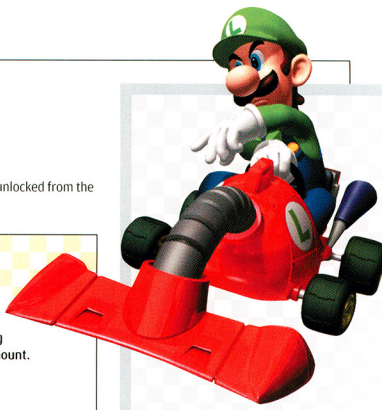
Multiball Mayhem

Once you hit the bottom of the course, you'll have to dodge several pinballs as they criss-cross your path.

Bumper to Bumper

Weave between the revolving bumpers to be in good position as you pass the dangerous flippers.





Retro Grand Prix

In addition to new tracks, Mario Kart DS hosts a collection of classic courses. Compete in the Retro Grand Prix to experience the proud lineage of Mario Kart DS, including tracks dating back to the SNES days.

Shell Cup
- SNES Mario Circuit 1
- N64 Moo Moo Farm
- GBA Peach Circuit
- GCN Luigi Circuit

Banana Cup
- SNES Donut Plains 1
- N64 Frappe Snowland
- GBA Bowser Castle 2
- GCN Baby Park

Leaf Cup
- SNES Koopa Beach 2
- N64 Choco Mountain
- GBA Luigi Circuit
- GCN Mushroom Bridge

Lightning Cup
- SNES Choco Island 2
- N64 Banshee Boardwalk
- GBA Sky Garden
- GCN Yoshi Circuit

Shell Cup
GCN Luigi Circuit

GCN Luigi Circuit revives one of the classic early races of Mario Kart: Double Dash!! Watch the map to avoid oncoming traffic.

Banana Cup
N64 Frappe Snowland

After a few tough laps around N64 Frappe Snowland, you'll never want to make another snowman.

Banana Cup
GCN Baby Park

Don't take a single corner without performing a Power Slide on GCN Baby Park's fast, short oval.

Leaf Cup
SNES Koopa Beach 2

Unless you fancy getting a tow from a nearby Lakitu, keep your kart out of the patches of dark water on SNES Koopa Beach 2.

Lightning Cup
GBA Sky Garden

On GBA Sky Garden, risky jumps can thrust you into the lead—or send you careening off the edge.

Star Cup

From mountain roads to flying ships, you'll find a bit of everything in the Star Cup. Drive smartly, or the difficult tracks will be your worst enemy.

DK PASS

Several blind corners can make DK Pass very difficult. Memorize the angle of every turn.

TICK-TOCK CLOCK

Follow the direction of the many spinning gears in Tick-Tock Clock to maintain top speed.

MARIO CIRCUIT

How you navigate the hairpin corners of Mario Circuit will determine your ultimate success.

AIRSHIP FORTRESS

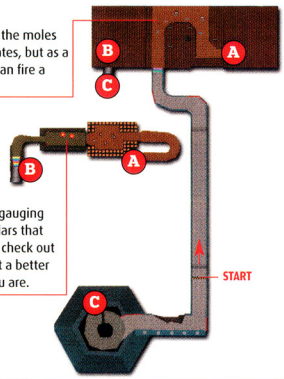
Don't let Airship Fortress's long straightaways fool you—the few corners it has are very difficult to maneuver. Watch out for the long corkscrew turn right after you get shot from the cannon.

Pothole Moles

It's best to steer clear of the moles that pop up from the grates, but as a last-ditch measure you can fire a shell to wipe them out.

Rising Flames

If you're having trouble gauging the timing of the fire pillars that sweep across your path, check out the bottom screen to get a better idea of how far away you are.



Special Cup

As you would expect, the Special Cup features some of the hardest courses in Mario Kart. You'll have to use your entire bag of tricks to win.

WARIO STADIUM

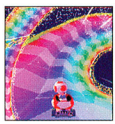
Monster jumps and huge pools of mud make Wario Stadium a high-speed technical challenge.

PEACH GARDENS

Use Mushrooms to boost through the low flower beds to make up valuable time on Peach Gardens.

RAINBOW ROAD

Be mindful of the edges of Rainbow Road's narrow track. Don't let the other drivers run you off the road.



BOWSER CASTLE

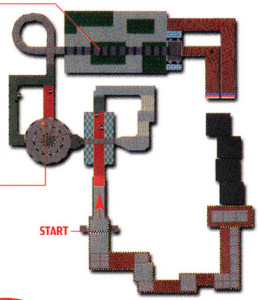
Moving platforms and tight turns make Bowser's Castle extradifficult. Most of the time, the middle of the track is the safest place to be.

Axle Grind

The rotating bridge will spin one way, then the other. Stay in the middle as much as possible.

Round and Round

Power-Slide around the spinning wheel and dodge the pillar of flame to find a very helpful shortcut.



Battle Arenas

What would Mario Kart be without Battle mode? OK, it'd still be pretty darn good. But when you're looking for a break from racing, you don't have to go far to find one of the most exciting multiplayer combat games you can get your hands on.

Nintendo DS

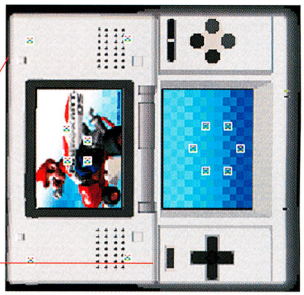
There's something familiar about the shape of this track. On a field without many places to hide, the best defense is a good offense—stay aggressive and seek out your opponents before they can gain an advantage.

Lost in Space

The Nintendo DS battle arena is pretty much just a big open square. There aren't any rails to prevent you from flying off the level. It's not worth trying to ram your opponents off the edge—you'll most likely go down with them.

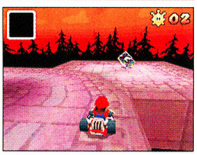
Sticking Point

The karts can drive from one half of the DS to the other only by crossing the DS's hinge. Take away an opponent's escape route by trapping him on the bottom screen before he crosses the hinge. Remember to stay out of the crease yourself, as well.



Twilight House

It's difficult to keep track of where you are among the large, connected rooms of the Twilight House, and getting off clean shots inside the tight confines of the arena is a challenge. Keep moving to give would-be attackers fits.

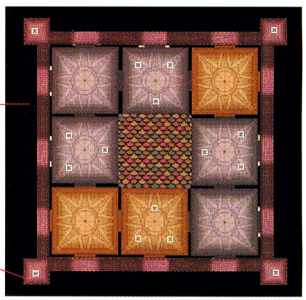


Tight Squeeze

The outer rim of the arena doesn't have any rails, making it a dangerous place to hang out. Hunt down enemies hanging out near the edge, but don't overpursue them—another enemy could come by and knock you off just as easily.

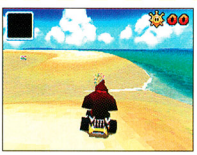
Stay outta the Corner

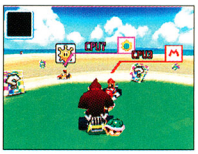
Since it's so easy to drive yourself right off the edge of the map, don't even try to pick up the Item Boxes in the arena's corners. Not only are you likely to fall into oblivion but the dead-end corners make you an easy target for opponents. Stick to the Item Boxes in the middle of the house.



Palm Shore

The rolling sandbars of Palm Shore make it deceptively difficult to keep track of your opponents. Use your map to keep track of your enemies, as well as to seek out temporary safe havens away from your opponents.



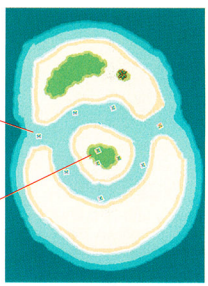


Water, Water Everywhere

Keep an eye on the tide as it fills the interior of the arena. When you try to drive through the deep water, you will slow down, making yourself an easy target. The lower-screen map shows the current water level.

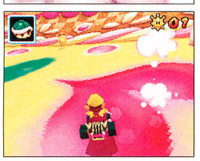
Central Authority

While it's not often a good strategy to stay in one place for long, Palm Shore's central island is an exception. With plenty of Item Boxes and a view of the entire level, you can stay in the middle of the island and pick off enemies from a distance.



Tart Top

Tart Top is the dessert after all the other Mario Kart DS goodness. The high-speed confines of the arena make for very aggressive battles. Your map won't be of much help—just trust your instincts and stay on the attack.

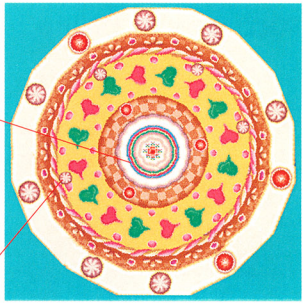


Jump for Joy

The only Item Boxes are high above the center of the battlefield. When going for an Item Box, point your wheels as straight toward the top of the screen as possible—if you're a little sideways, you might not boost high enough to reach the ring of boxes.

Screen Cream

Avoid the giant strawberries and dollops of cream around the level. If you run into them, they'll splat your screen with yummy frosting. Delicious? Yes. Dangerous? Even more so. Though not as bad as a Blooper attack, your obscured vision can still be a terrible hazard.



Block Fort

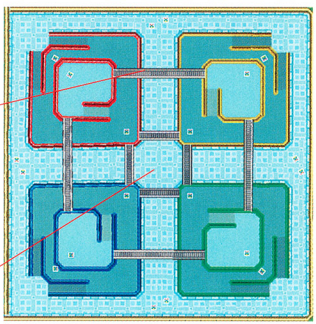
One of the legendary battle arenas from Mario Kart 64 returns for more action. On a big battlefield like this, your lower-screen map will be your best friend—don't let your opponents get the jump on you.

Gift from Above

Toss shells and bombs down on your enemies from one of the high spots around the level—they'll never see 'em coming. Better still, by the time they find out what hit them, they won't be able to retaliate.

Down to the Crossroads

Blind corners are always a great place to lie in wait for unsuspecting opponents. The central intersection of the Block Fort can be especially dangerous. Keep an eye out on the map both for approaching enemies unaware of your position and for opponents sneaking up behind you.



Pipe Plaza

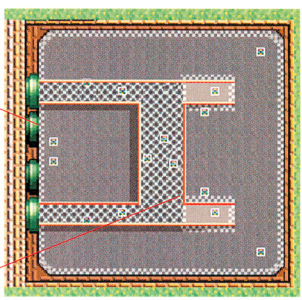
Most of Pipe Plaza's fierce action takes place just outside the lower pipes. Stay on the mesh platforms above the fray and take down your enemies with a hail of shells and bombs.

Duck and Cover

The two-way warp pipes connect the upper and lower levels of the arena. Use them to your defensive advantage. Stay near them, and when an enemy shell approaches, duck into a pipe to shake it off your tail.

Down Under

There aren't many places to hide in the small arena, so you gotta take cover where you can. Stop underneath the ramps in the middle of the battlefield to survey the action. But, as always, when you're lying in wait keep an eye on your map to avoid getting blindsided.



Unlockables

Experienced Mario Karters will want to jump straight to the 150cc class, but don't overlook some of the awesome unlockables available at the lower speed classes.

50cc: Sunday Drivin'

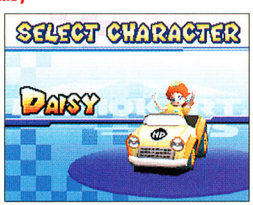
The competition might be easier at the 50cc level, but the unlockables are just as sweet. Beat both cups to unlock a couple of classic characters.

Nitro Dem Bones, Dem Bones, Dem Dry Bones

If you can grab first place on the 50cc Special Cup, Dry Bones will be available to race. He might not be the quickest racer, but his impressive acceleration will get him going again after taking a direct hit from a shell or a banana.

Retro Driving Miss Daisy

To unlock perennial Mario sports all-star Daisy, finish the 50cc Lightning Cup in first place. She's a very well-balanced driver overall, and her remarkable drift ability will get you around tight corners in a hurry.



100cc: Weekend Warrior

The action's heating up! Use one of the newly unlocked racers to open up Luigi's arch nemesis, as well as some sweet new wheels.

Nitro One More for the Road

After your first number-one finish in the 100cc Special Cup, every driver will have one extra vehicle at his disposal. Experiment with different vehicles to find one which best matches your driving style.

Retro Purple Power

Once you've finished the 100cc Lightning Cup for the first time, you'll be able to race as the dastardly Waluigi. Waluigi is a balanced driver, but tends to run a bit heavy. If ramming opponents isn't your game, you might be better off with another driver.

150cc: Speed Demon!

With a few races under your belt, you're ready for the big time. Hit the 150cc cups to open up a bunch of new karts, as well as a new way to run.

Nitro Magnificent Seven

After you top the competition in either the 150cc Special Cup or Lightning Cup, a total of seven vehicles will be available to each driver. If you skipped finishing 100cc mode, you'll earn the kart you would have unlocked.

Retro Mario in the Mirror

Finish both the 150cc Special and Lightning cups in first place to open up a new class: the 150cc Mirror class. As the name suggests, all of the tracks will be mirror images of the originals.

Further Reflection

A few more secrets unlock once you've finished Mirror mode, but we'll let you see those for yourself. Let's just say that one of the unlockables will "stack up" against the competition quite nicely. You've got a long road ahead of you, so start practicing!

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_ _ _ _ _

The dead-end street where the Eds live is a _-de-sac.

_ _ _ _

Jonny 2x4's best friend is a ____.

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Eddy knows the secret recipe for the El ____ Stink Bomb.

_ _ _ _ _

Go to www.midwaycartoon.com and enter the secret code from above to unlock more Mis-Edventures.

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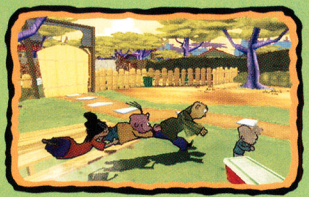

EVERYONE E — Cartoon Violence, Crude Humor

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MIDWAY

answer: sarah, cul, plank, mongo.

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SCOREBOARD SOARING

Ready to show the world your gripping and grinding skills? The Nintendo Wi-Fi Connection and Tony Hawk's American Sk8land for the DS give you the tools to vie for the title of top hawk.

By George Sinfield

You may be the best Tony Hawk-title player among your circle of friends, but how do you stack up against all of the world's skate fans? You're about to find out. The DS version of Tony Hawk's American Sk8land interfaces with the Nintendo Wi-Fi Connection to create a community of skater pros and wannabes. The best of the best show up on a constantly updating scoreboard that keeps track of accomplishments in each of the game's seven 3-D levels. So, how do you become one of the high-flying elite? Scout the locations, pick a scoring specialty (ground, air, lips, rails) and refine your skills. We'll get you started with the basics and some sage advice from the game's developers.

EVERYONE
E
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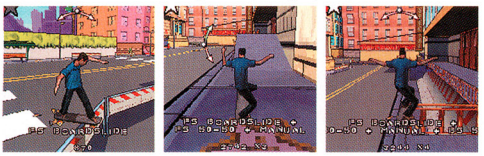
THE COMBO IS KING

Big tricks with lots of multipliers will send you into the scoring stratosphere. It's all about sustaining a trick and making plenty of moves in the middle to increase your point total exponentially. But don't get greedy. If you bail during a blockbuster, your efforts could go to waste, leaving you with a spectacular goose egg.

THE MISSING LINK

How do you keep a good thing going? The secret to any combo is in linking tricks. When landing on a quarter-pipe, press X or R to revert. You'll transition into a manual automatically. When your two-wheel trick begins to lose momentum, press L and left or right to move to a bert slide. Grinds are also great links, as long as you can find a line.



BUILDING CHARACTER

When you select the View Stats option in the Progress menu, you'll see your current standing in eight skill categories. Highlight each category to see what you need to do to reach the next level. Then dedicate a few runs to pumping up your numbers.

TOUCH AND GO

By filling the Special meter, you'll enable slow motion and special moves that you can trigger by the touch screen. You'll start the game with a single special-move icon and make two more appear by completing 20 then 40 goals in Story mode. Make special moves the cornerstone of any big combo.

WIPE OUT, CLEAN UP

In the Tony Hawk's Pro Skater titles, big bails left you with nothing but a bruised ego. But the introduction of the Freak Out has allowed you to recoup some of your lost points. Touch the three meters on the lower screen when they're full to maximize your score.

TIME-OUT TRICKERY

Classic mode is home to Wi-Fi scoreboard sessions. If you're going for an overall high score, it's imperative that you ride past the two-minute limit. Start a trick with seconds to go and keep linking moves. The session will continue as long as you sustain the combo.

WHO, WHAT AND WI-FI

Big-air moves and high-scoring combos are reasons to crow in Sk8land. The Nintendo Wi-Fi Connection works with Activision's Sk8land website (www.american-sk8land.com) to let you spread word of your accomplishments. It offers two scoreboards, manages head-to-head play between friends and randomly selected participants, and allows you to share artwork and replays with the Sk8land community.

SHOW THEM HOW YOU ROLL

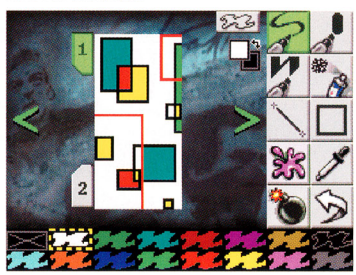
A head-to-head session (using a local or Wi-Fi connection) lasts as long as both players are willing. Call out a mode, then outperform your opponent in a single trick, a combo or a timed run.

LORDS OF THE BOARDS

After you've blasted through a few Classic-mode sessions (either connected to the server or not), you'll want to see how your accomplishments stack up against those of others. Upload your data then scan the scoreboards for your name.

DEAL FROM A LOADED DECK

In the Tony Hawk tradition, Sk8land includes a deck-art and graffiti-tag editor. You can upload your custom designs to Activision's website via the Wi-Fi Connection and download works from other players.



IT'S GOOD TO HAVE GOALS

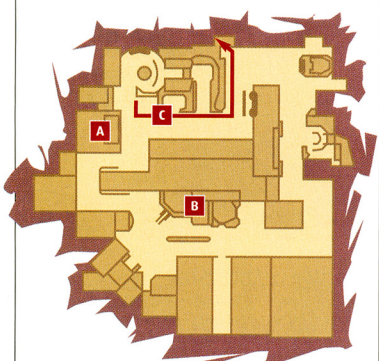
Even after you've mastered all of the game's Story-mode goals, you'll have a chance to take on new challenges. Every time you upload your stats, you'll grab the latest downloadable goal. Activision plans to offer a new goal every month.

WHERE THERE'S AIR

The world is your skate park. If you're going for grinds, look for ledges and wires. If manuals and flatland tricks are your style, search for open spaces. If you want to twist and flip, seek out facing quarter-pipes. The following pages single out some of our favorite places to score big combos in each of the game's levels, as well as some trick-location recommendations from the game designers at Vicarious Visions. Play Story mode first to unlock the special moves and skate without a time limit. Then try your hand at Classic mode.

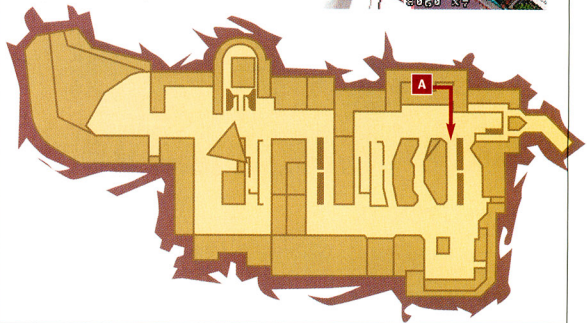
HOLLYWOOD

Pools are fantastic for pulling off endless grinds and linked air tricks. The closer the edges of the pool are to each other, the easier it will be to link tricks without losing momentum. Points A and B mark two pools that you can reach by pulling off R-Button-triggered spine transfers. Path C is lead designer Leo Zuniga's favorite combo line. As the session begins, grind the first guard rail (it's just left of the starting point). Ride it around the corner, then transfer to the two sets of bleachers in succession. Land into a manual, grind the next set of guard rails, manual, then fly off the quarter-pipe and grind the wire to the left to go around the theatre.



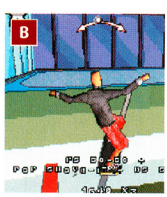
BEVERLY HILLS

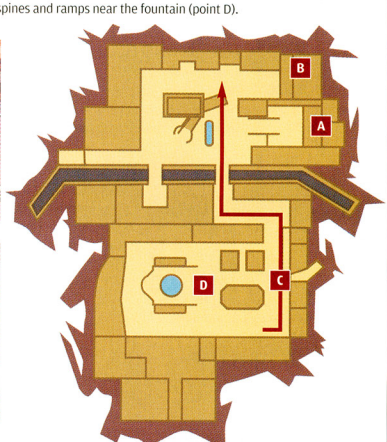
Beverly Hills has a lot of quarter-pipes, street-level grinds and roads for flatland tricks, but for easy access from the starting point (a must in a timed run), the Welshore Hotel roof is the place to go. Designer Joseph Cecot recommends that you spine-transfer onto the roof from the quarter-pipe near the main door. Once you've had your fill of air tricks off the rooftop quarters, grind one of the hotel ledges to the right. Ollie at the end and grind onto the power lines for a trip around the level.



DOWNTOWN

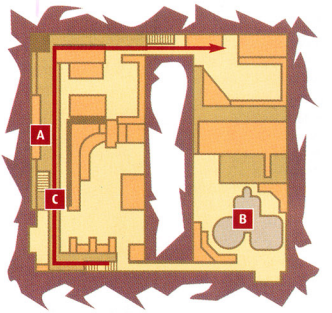
Down the railroad tracks and over the Italian flag, you can spine-transfer into a rectangular roof with quarter-pipe lips (point A). A smaller roof is accessible via spine transfer over the front of the building at point B. If you want to improve your manual and grind skills, turn left from the start, grind onto the sidewalk near the trash containers and follow line C. One of designer Marc Janas's favorite types of tricks is the flip (hold A or Y, then double-tap a direction). Flips require big air, which you can grab from the spines and ramps near the fountain (point D).

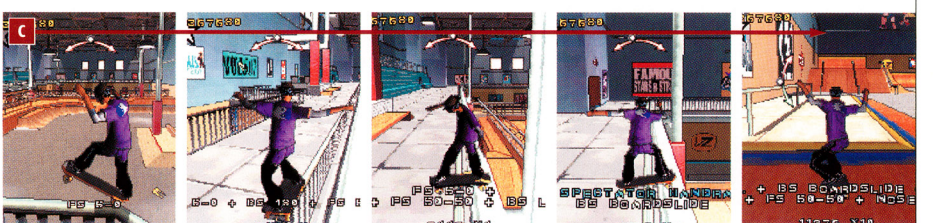




VANS

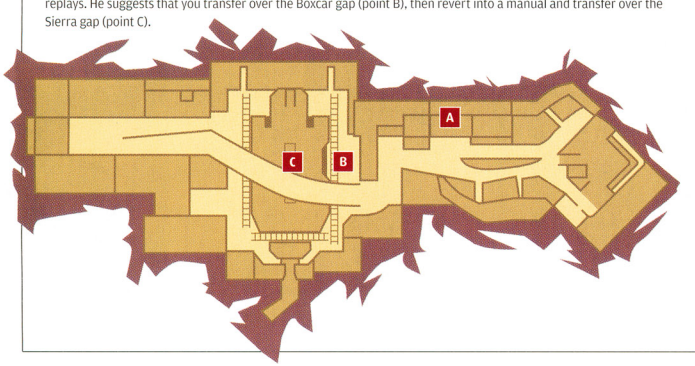
The sign of a superior place for air tricks is two long quarter-pipes that face each other. You'll find such a location at point A in the Vans skate park. As long as you can sustain momentum, you'll get huge air for elaborate grab, flip and spin combinations. The pool at point B is oddly shaped, making it difficult to chart a path when you're moving quickly, but the tall walls are terrific for reverts. When you grind along the edge of the pool, ollie over the shallow end and continue your grind on the other side. Line C is one of the longest continuous rails in the game. It's a good avenue for the Round the World goal in Story mode, which asks you to go from one end of the park to another in a single combo.





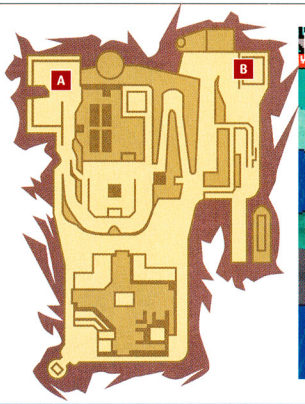
EAST LA

If you stick to the roads, the pool in East LA is easy to miss. The best way to reach the rooftop rectangle (point A) is to spine-transfer from the quarter-pipes below it onto the roof of a neighboring building, then hop ramps and follow the path. The pool is shallow and narrow—fantastic for air tricks strung together by revert-triggered manuals. Producer Dan Wallace is a big fan of the spine transfer because it gives you lots of air, and flips over transfers look great in replays. He suggests that you transfer over the Boxcar gap (point B), then revert into a manual and transfer over the Sierra gap (point C).



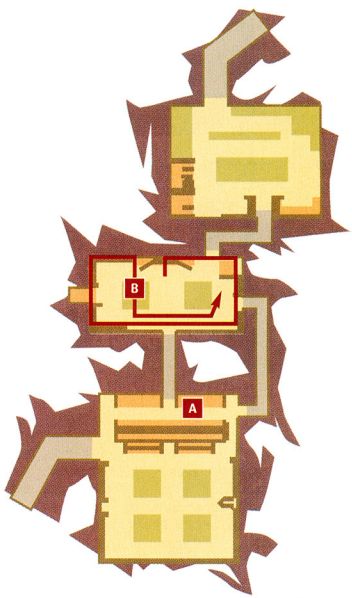
ALCATRAZ

The multilevel island prison in the San Francisco Bay is a complex series of windy paths, broken rails and ledges. You'll take more than one dip in the drink as you attempt transfers over the walls. It's an exciting but dangerous place to try long grinds. Since many players might find the area to be a tricky skate and since there's a different scoreboard for each area, the level could be your place for scoreboard dominance. The obstacle-free yard at point A has tall quarter-pipes for your air-grabbing pleasure, and the square enclosure at point B will let you string together tricks and manuals before you go on an endless grind around the perimeter.



WAREHOUSE

You have a say over the nature of some of the pieces inside the warehouse as you purchase them in Story mode, but other parts are permanent fixtures, such as the spine and quarter-pipes at point A. There's no question why one of the Story-mode goals is to rack up big points off combos in the area. Even if you're off target on a landing, you'll likely hit the next ramp because of their lengths. You'll have to build a lot of speed to get up to the girder grind represented by line B, but it will be worth it. When you have enough height, transfer onto the girder and ride it as far as you can, pulling off kick flips and heel flips along the way. When you get to the end, drop into a manual and ride that up a lip along the edge of the room to cap off the sequence with either a grind or a lip trick.



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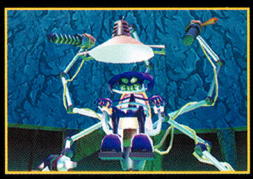

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JANUARY 2006

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10 Winners

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25 Winners

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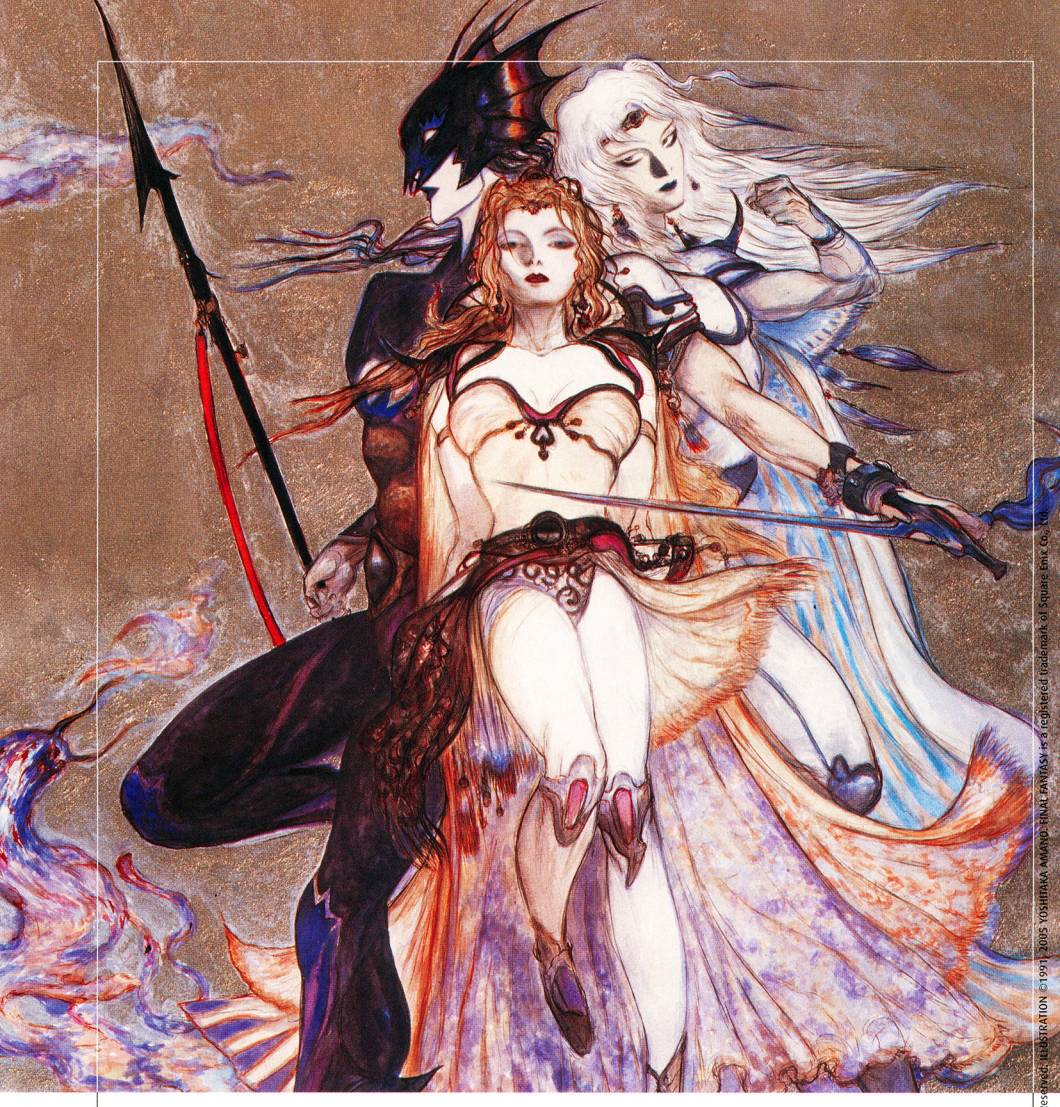

The Final Frontier

As FINAL FANTASY IV Advance looms on the horizon, we take a closer look at the resurrection of one of the greatest RPGs of all time.

By Andy Myers

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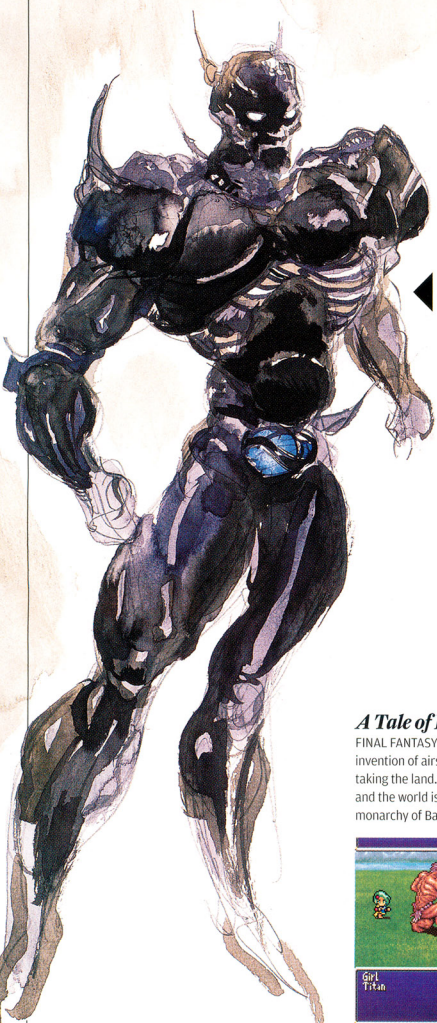
In 1991, FINAL FANTASY II (known as FINAL FANTASY IV EZ in Japan) was released for the Super NES. Its innovative battle system and epic storyline altered gamers' perceptions of what could be achieved in a video game. Now, for the first time on Nintendo hardware, Square Enix is bringing the full version of its classic RPG, along with a handful of extra features, to North America in the form of FINAL FANTASY IV Advance.



Cecil

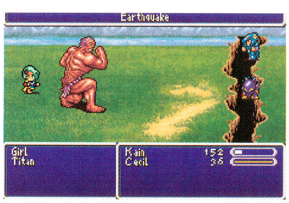
After being banished from his homeland, Cecil the Dark Knight embarks on a journey to learn the truth about his dark past.

Golbez

As the new commander of Baron's Red Wings, the mysterious and powerful Golbez will stop at nothing to destroy Cecil.

A Tale of Redemption

FINAL FANTASY IV Advance begins at the dawn of the invention of airships, when an unknown evil is overtaking the land. Vicious monsters are everywhere, and the world is at its knees as the the once-peaceful monarchy of Baron preys on weaker nations. Baron's king rains fire on innocent villages with mighty fleets of airships, searching the world for four ancient crystals and destroying anything that lies in his path.



Unlike its three predecessors, FINAL FANTASY IV puts you in the shoes of an antihero, the Dark Knight Cecil. At the start of the game, Cecil is the commander of Baron's most powerful and infamous fleet, the Red Wings. After unknowingly killing the mother of a young Summoner named Rydia at his king's order, Cecil sets out to right the many wrongs he has committed and to stop the king. Cecil will face many dangers on his journey, including Golbez, Cecil's successor as commander of the Red Wings and a dangerous adversary. If the Dark Knight is to succeed, he must face his past, which is even more frightening than Golbez.

Standing the Test of Time

Many NES owners played the original FINAL FANTASY, but it wasn't until the release of FINAL FANTASY II for the Super NES that a host of young North American gamers, including myself, became hooked on the series for life. The game's style was similar to its predecessor's, but something was altogether different about FFII. It was immersive on a level that no console game before it had been, and it set the stage for many great games to come.

With the upcoming GBA release of FINAL FANTASY IV Advance drawing near, FFII fans of old can now play the full version of the game (known as FINAL FANTASY IV), while fans new to the series can experience the brilliant saga for the very first time. When FFIV was created in Japan more than 13 years ago (in the 32-bit era), graphics alone could not drive the

game—it relied heavily on its plot to hold gamers' interest. The epic story, intriguing characters, and emotionally charged dialogue of the game hold their own even when compared to current RPGs.

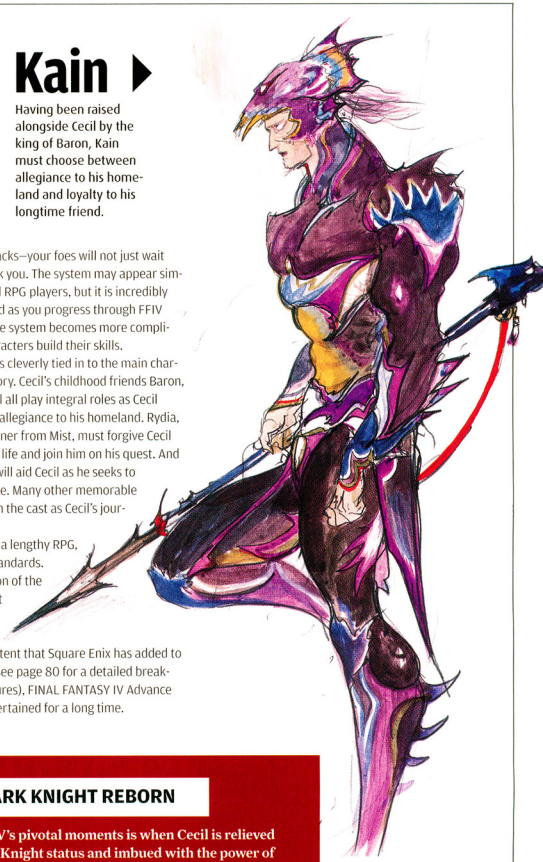
FFIV was the first in the series to introduce real-time elements into a turn-based fighting system. As you battle random enemies with Cecil and his party members, there is a slight element of urgency when choosing your attacks—your foes will not just wait their turn to attack you. The system may appear simplistic to seasoned RPG players, but it is incredibly well-balanced. And as you progress through FFIV Advance, the battle system becomes more complicated as your characters build their skills.

Each character is cleverly tied in to the main character's twisting story. Cecil's childhood friends Baron, Kain and Rosa, will all play integral roles as Cecil struggles with his allegiance to his homeland. Rydia, the young Summoner from Mist, must forgive Cecil for destroying her life and join him on his quest. And Edward the Bard will aid Cecil as he seeks to avenge his lost love. Many other memorable characters will join the cast as Cecil's journey continues.

FFIV Advance is a lengthy RPG, even by today's standards. The original version of the game clocked in at about 40 hours of play time. With the additional content that Square Enix has added to the GBA version (see page 80 for a detailed breakdown of new features), FINAL FANTASY IV Advance will keep fans entertained for a long time.

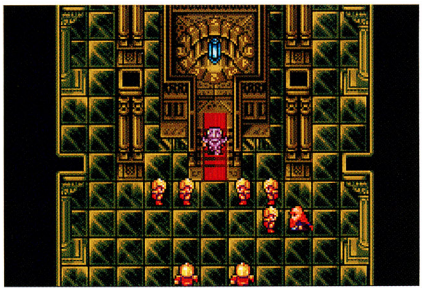
Kain ▸

Having been raised alongside Cecil by the king of Baron, Kain must choose between allegiance to his homeland and loyalty to his longtime friend.



◂ THE DARK KNIGHT REBORN

One of FFIV's pivotal moments is when Cecil is relieved of his Dark Knight status and imbued with the power of a Paladin. The hero must come face-to-face with his dark side before completing the transformation, which is his first step in learning the truth about his past. As a Paladin, Cecil will wield the powerful Sword of Legend.



A Series Like No Other

The breadth of the FINAL FANTASY series is unparalleled. Almost every FINAL FANTASY game takes place in its own world, with its own characters and a unique story. The core titles in the series have blazed the trail for the RPG genre, and spin-off games such as FINAL FANTASY Tactics and FINAL FANTASY: Crystal Chronicles have broken out of the traditional turn-based RPG mold and introduced innovative new gameplay methods. In all, more than 20 different games bear the FINAL FANTASY name.

Though each entry in the series is unique, many contain elements that are undeniably FINAL FANTASY. Cid, for instance, usually makes an appearance, and he usually has something to do with airships. Ostrich-like creatures known as Chocobos are another FF staple—parties can ride them across a game's overworld to avoid random monster encounters. And the illustrations of Yoshitaka Amano (as seen throughout this article) are a beloved FINAL FANTASY tradition.

Cid

Cid, Baron's airship mechanic, is like a father figure to the lovely Rosa.

DO THE MATH

Even skilled mathematicians have trouble understanding the FINAL FANTASY series's numbering system. In recent years, Square Enix has adopted the true game titles for all of its new North American versions of the games. We've outlined the history of the GBA FINAL FANTASY titles (not including the recently announced FINAL FANTASY V & VI) to clear up the confusion.

FINAL FANTASY NES 1990

The game that started it all, FINAL FANTASY introduced NES players to the series that defined the RPG genre as we know it.

FINAL FANTASY I & II: Dawn of Souls GBA 2004

FINAL FANTASY and the Japanese-only title FINAL FANTASY II (not to be confused with the North American version of FINAL FANTASY II for the SNES; see below) were beautifully re-created with new features and updated graphics for the GBA in 2004.

FINAL FANTASY II SNES 1991

This SNES masterpiece when released in North America was actually a modified version of the Japanese title FINAL FANTASY IV. The title was changed because the true FINAL FANTASY II, as well as FINAL FANTASY III, were released only in Japan. FINAL FANTASY III has yet to hit North American shores.

FINAL FANTASY IV Advance GBA 2005

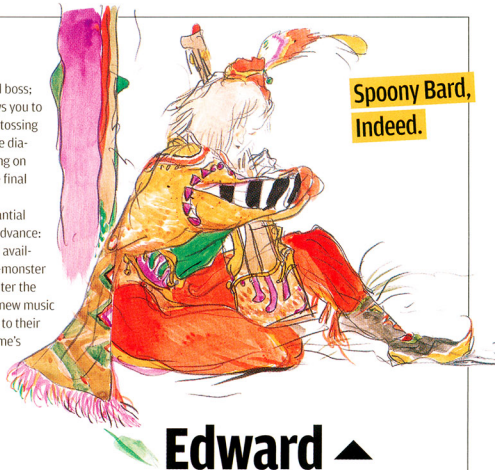
The full version of FFIV appeared for the first time in North America on the PlayStation as part of the FINAL FANTASY Chronicles collection. FINAL FANTASY IV Advance, slated for release on December 12, comprises the complete version of FFIV as well as some additional content, which is revealed in detail later in this article.

FINAL FANTASY IV Anew

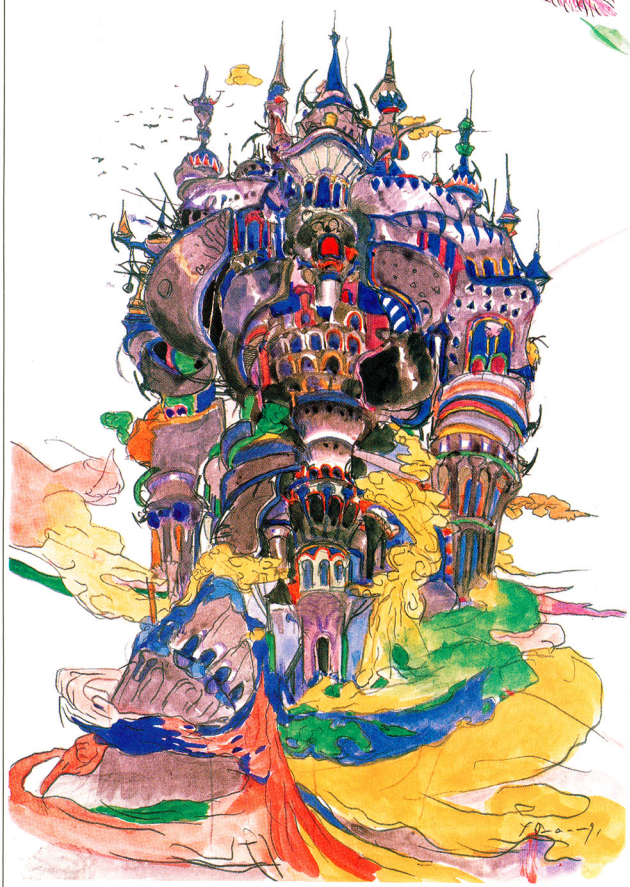
When Square first released FINAL FANTASY IV in North America and dubbed it FINAL FANTASY II, it was a pared-down version of the Japanese game, and the difficulty level had been reduced slightly. FINAL FANTASY IV Advance contains the complete version of FFIV, but it is much more than a port of the 2001 PlayStation version. Square Enix has added features that are exclusive to FINAL FANTASY IV Advance.

The biggest additions are the new dialogue and areas. An all-new 50-level dungeon will be accessible exclusively in FINAL FANTASY IV Advance. Also, a training dungeon now appears near the end of the game—it may sound odd, but it's extraordinarily useful. In all previous versions of FFIV, you were stuck with a predetermined group of five party members to take into the final area. In the GBA game, however, you have the option to reunite with any living party members, and it's up to you to decide which ones will accompany you to the final boss; the training dungeon allows you to level up weak units before tossing them into the fray. Even the dialogue will change depending on which units you take to the final fight.

A few fun but less-substantial additions round out FFIV Advance: a complete bestiary is now available from the Start menu—monster info unlocks as you encounter the beasts in the game—and a new music player allows fans to listen to their favorite portions of the game's remixed soundtrack on command.



Spoony Bard, Indeed.



Edward ▲

After witnessing the death of his love at the hand of Golbez, Edward the Bard vows to avenge her.

The Final Countdown

With only a few weeks left until the release of FINAL FANTASY IV Advance for GBA, NP's preparing some massive coverage of the game for next month's monumental 200th issue. In addition to a critical review of the title, we'll be providing readers with a miniguide that will include in-depth strategy for the game's extra features (including the new 50-level dungeon).

We're eagerly awaiting more news on Square Enix's recent announcements in Japan, including FINAL FANTASY V & VI for GBA and a FINAL FANTASY III 3-D overhaul for Nintendo DS. (So far, these games have been announced for release only in Japan.) But FINAL FANTASY IV Advance should be plenty to tide over the most rabid FF fan—its fidelity to the original and its slew of extra features make it the quintessential version of the fan favorite.

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Pinball Wizards

Metroid Prime Pinball has scored big on the DS. We asked two of the developers from Fuse Games to reveal some of the secrets to its success.

By George Sinfield

ADRIAN BARRITT
PROJECT DIRECTOR

RICHARD HORROCKS
TECHNICAL DIRECTOR

Fuse Games, Full Tilt

Nintendo Power: What are your favorite pinball video games?

Adrian Barritt: I played Pokémon Pinball quite a lot on the Game Boy Color. The other one that goes back some time was on the Super Famicom, which was Jaki Crush. It has a few similarities to Metroid in that there are some creatures that walk around the table that you can crush, and you can make shots that head off into a few directions.

NP: What makes a successful video pinball game?

AB: One of the most fundamental things is a good underlying physics system, allowing you to actually call the shots that are on the table. With some games it seems as if the table was designed by one person and the physics system was designed by another. You can't even aim and make half the shots on the table. You need a foundation to start off with, to make the ball move in a sufficiently realistic way so the player can anticipate what will happen and they're not fighting it all the time. On top of that, you want a lot of variety, strategy and things to discover, so every time you play the game, there are new things that you can try.

NP: Would you consider it important for a video pinball game to have features that you wouldn't find in an actual pinball game?

AB: Not necessarily. When we started out doing pinball games, the first games that we did were straight simulations and lots of people enjoyed those for what they were. On the other hand, it's also exciting to have the flexibility and freedom to come up with ideas that you simply can't do in the real world. Certainly, having done straight pinball simulations in the past, we embrace these more-hybrid types where you've got creatures to fight and upgrades to earn. It just makes our job much more interesting. Hopefully, the game players will find that too.

NP: Metroid Prime Pinball adheres to all of the rules of real pinball, and it has extra elements that really add a lot.

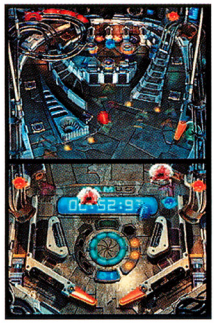
AB: Indeed; that's exactly what we set out to do. We wanted it to have the physics and abilities of a real pinball game. Then, we looked for additional elements that would not only be perfect for the Metroid universe, but also suit pinball-based gameplay. It was quite an interesting challenge trying to think of what would work best and give the player variety.

NP: What lessons did you learn from the Mario Pinball Land project that you've taken to Metroid Prime Pinball?

AB: Mario Pinball Land was a big departure from what you would call traditional pinball. We deliberately tried to do something that was very different. I think that there were a lot of people who really liked this idea and wanted something new and fresh. Some other people who were more purists were looking for something that was a bit more traditional. We thought that this time it would be good to try on one hand to add new stuff, but also make sure that we still had a game that appeals to people who like their pinball a little bit more traditional.

NP: What does the DS bring to the pinball genre?

Richard Horrocks: The two screens allow us to present a viewpoint of the game that gives you a much better feel. What happened with Mario Pinball Land was, in order to get it down to the single GBA screen, we had a very forced view of the table. People thought that perhaps the physics were off a bit, because what was actually a long table looked short, and they thought that the ball wasn't getting all the way to the back. So, having the two screens means that we can have a viewpoint that is much more familiar to pinball players. We did have some concerns with the ball transitioning between the upper and lower screens, but as soon as we had the game up and running, that proved to be not a problem at all. No one has had a problem with losing the ball when it moves between the two screens. We experimented with different sizes of virtual



gaps, as it were, including having no gap at all. When the ball went straight from one screen to another, it felt very disjointed, almost as if the ball had received some sort of boost. So we tried all sorts of different spaces until we got the one that seemed to be the best balance.

AB: If the ball is in that region, it is immune to attack.

NP: Another thing that you've been able to do, since it's on the DS, is include a Rumble Pak that fits into the GBA slot.

AB: It's the ideal peripheral to go with a pinball game, because pinball is a very physical game with the ball bouncing around, and to be able to actually feel it as it goes around is great. We're glad that [the Rumble Pak's developers at Nintendo] were able to squeeze it into the space of the GBA slot. It doesn't stick out.

NP: How did you decide what game elements would trigger the Pak to rumble?

RH: You can't have it rumble too frequently, because you'd kind of become immune to it. So, when something significant is happening or when Samus is taking damage, the rumble sort of immerses the player into what is happening on the table.

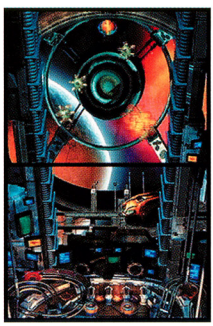
NP: You use the touch screen, as well.

AB: For a while we were really wondering what we might use the touch screen for, because it wouldn't seem natural for you to put your fingers on the screen to control the flippers. But the nudge and tilt really work. You put your thumb on the screen and you push it, and the whole table moves. If the ball connects with that, it'll get a nudge. You can do little gentle nudges or really strong ones. And, with practice, you get a little extra skill and control over the ball.

NP: I'm half expecting that I should be able to start shouting into the DS and influence the ball through voice control.

AB: We did think about that. But we wanted to avoid using the microphone because of the rumble. The vibrations could interfere with the sound.

RH: We also wanted to avoid using [DS features] that would just be gimmicks. We tried to think of things that would perfectly integrate with the game, that would be natural; a natural way of controlling it, rather than just using the features.



NP: What was your process in finding the right Metroid Prime elements to incorporate into the game?

AB: We have an incremental process here at Fuse where we don't try to plan too much up front. We have the flexibility to try things out and see where that might lead us. So to start out, we just went for the basics: the ball, the flippers and a few things to bump into. And we just added things over time, like enemies and bombs.

NP: What role do the traditional Metroid weapons—the bombs and missiles—play in the game?

AB: The bombs in particular are useful for attacking the enemies. You can drop a bomb behind you; if you time it right, it will help you destroy an enemy. The bombs are also used in the spinning awards feature. If you place a bomb at the right moment, you can help influence where [the spinning wheel] stops and which awards you will earn. You can also get the ball to jump into the air. That slows down the movement of the ball, which can be of use at times.

NP: What's the story behind the Phazon multiball feature?

AB: The ball splits into two Phazon versions—red and blue—that bounce around at the same time. On the table, there are lots of red and blue Phazon that you can pick up. But you can only pick up globs that match with the corresponding color. If you pick one up that doesn't match, the other ball will go bouncing into a different direction. It's quite interesting and challenging, and something that you wouldn't be able to do in the real world.

NP: How does the level progression work in Multi-Mission mode?

RH: You start with the two base tables, Pirate Frigate and Tallon Overworld. Once you complete a number of the modes within that, you can then move onto some other tables, the Phendrana Drifts and Phazon Mines, which have boss characters that you can fight against. Also, as you're playing, you collect artifacts as you do in the original Metroid Prime. Once you've collected 12 of these artifacts, and you get to a point where you can travel, you can get access to the Artifact Temple, which is set up for six-ball multiball play. You're knocking around, trying to hit the balls into the Artifact Temple.

AB: At the end, there's a classic adversary that makes life really nasty for you.

RH: If you complete that, you're given access to the Impact Crater, where you can fight against. . . .

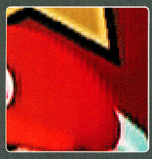
AB: . . . yet another classic adversary. And the game doesn't end there because of the classic Metroid backtracking. You can return to earlier tables with upgrades that allow you to do things that you weren't able to do the first time around. The other thing that we put in is a level system, so the more you return to an area, the game keeps upping the challenge. You have to make better and better use of the weapons that are available to you.

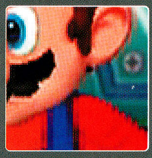
NP: Are the different tables suited for different types of pinball play?

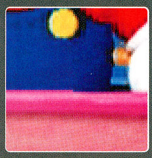
AB: Probably. There's a lot of variety in the base tables because you'll spend a larger percentage of your gameplay time there. In the other tables, the main objective is to beat the boss, but we have made sure that there are interesting and lucrative side tasks that you can try. There is a bit of a different feel to the different type of tables.

NP: What types of games would you like to see more of on the DS?

AB: A genre that I'm particularly fond of is shoot-'em-ups. I'd love to see something as good as Ikaruga. It's an absolute masterpiece. It would be interesting to see if you could do a vertical-scrolling shoot-'em-up on the two screens.







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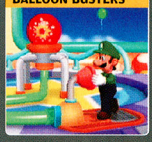

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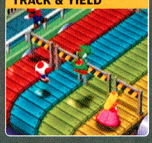

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SNOW RIDE

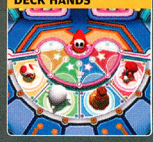
2

STUMP CHANGE

3

4

DECK HANDS



PYRAMID SCHEME

1 **BUBBLE BRAWL** (4-player free-for-all) Punch your enemies out of the massive bubble. Be the last one standing, er, floating to win.

2 **FUN RUN** (4-player free-for-all) Try to avoid the Spiny shells, dangerous pits and other obstacles as you race up the tower.

3 **POKEY PUMMEL** (4-player free-for-all) Swing your hammer wildly to knock away all of the giant Pokey's body segments.

4 **REAL SMOOTHIE** (8-player game) Share a controller with your partner and cooperatively grab the correct type of fruit as it appears.

5 **TARGET TAG** (4-player free-for-all) Fly through the air and collect tokens after being shot out of a cannon.

MINI GAMES MEGA FUN

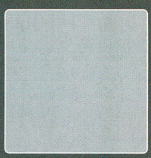
6 **GIMME A SIGN** (2-player duel) To avoid getting dunked, watch the signs to see what part of the bridge is going to fall.

7 **CLOCK WATCHERS** (4-player mic game) Speak into the mic to stop the hidden timer. Whoever gets closest to the indicated time wins.

8 **BALLOONATIC** (3-on-1 game) One player floats through the air; the others try to shoot him or her down with cannons!

9 **WARP PIPE DREAMS** (2-player duel) Jump into pipes and find a path to the center of the maze. The first one there wins.

10 **WHEEL OF WOE** (3-on-1 mic game) One player commands Chain Chomps, Bullet Bills and a Shy Guy to attack the other players.



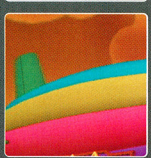
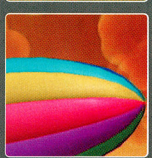
BIG DRIPPER

5

CATCHY TUNES

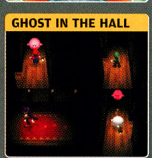
8

COIN-OP BOP

SPHERE FACTOR

GHOST IN THE HALL



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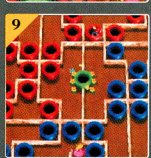

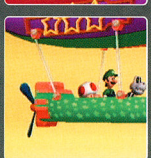
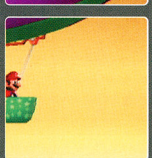

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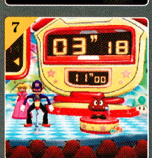


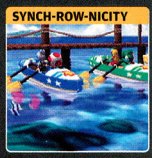
10

EVERYONE

E

CONTENT RATED BY ESRB

© 2005 Nintendo. ©2005 HUDSON SOFT.



11 **DUCT & COVER** (8-player game) Teams of two cooperate to patch leaky pipes by tapping the correct buttons.

12 **GRIN AND BAR IT** (8-player game) This eight-player jump-rope game keeps getting faster and faster. Don't trip!

13 **FRUIT PUNCH** (1-player mic game) You must memorize the fruity images and say the name of each nutritious treat into the mic.

14 **BUMPER TO BUMPER** (8-player game) Use bumper cars to knock your opponents off the tilting platform.

15 **STICK AND SPIN** (1-player game) In this bonus game, match up colored orbs as they fall onto the rotatable playfield.

Mario Party has always been known for its minigames, and Mario Party 7 for GCN has more than 80, including all-new eight-player minigames, microphone minigames and Bowser challenges.

By Chris Hoffman

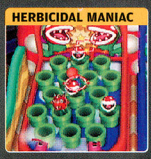
16 **MONTY'S REVENGE** (4-player free-for-all) Avoid the moles' hammers and try to stay above ground the longest.

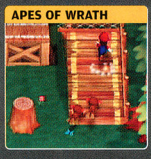
17 **ROPE A DOPE** (8-player game) If you fall while racing across the narrow platforms, you'll pull your partner down with you.

18 **VINE COUNTRY** (1-player DK game) Avoid the spiders and falling honeycombs as you pit your vine-climbing skills against DK's.

19 **PICTURE THIS** (4-player free-for-all) Flip through the pages of a picture book to find the indicated image.

20 **BOXING DAY** (3-on-1 mic game) Command a large punching robot to KO the other players before they blow you up!

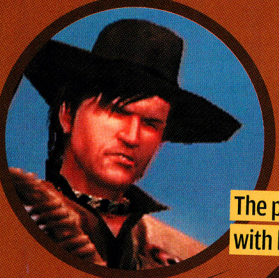




How to Win the West

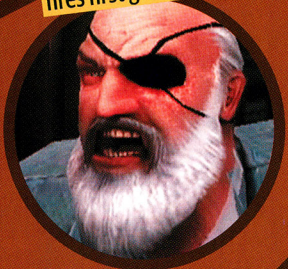
Activision's **Gun** puts you in one tight spot after another. Heed our quick-draw advice to be the last gunfighter standing.

By George Sinfield



The path to glory is strewn with bodies.

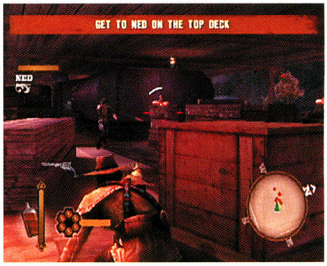
No rules. No law. He who fires first gets the gold.



MATURE 17+
M
CONTENT RATED BY ESRB

Learn the Ways of the West

The untamed West is populated with unsavory louts who'd sooner gun you down than give you the time of day. Before you can meet them face-to-face, you'll have to learn how to shoot and how to ride. The game's opening section trains you in those skills. By the time you reach Dodge City, you'll be ready to take on the surliest galoots in town.



During the attack on the *Morning Star*, duck for cover, reload by pressing right on the Control Pad and wait for your enemies to show. Hit targets in the head to fill your Quickdraw meter, and drink from your flask to keep your health. In the open, use Quickdraw to take on big groups.

Holding the L Button is the key to victory during your horse race against Tom. Hold L and, when you need a burst of speed, release the button then press and hold it again, keeping an eye on your horse's health meter. When fighting Tom and his men, use Quickdraw when they're close and bust out your rifle when they're far away.

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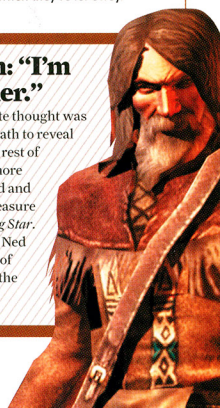
Ned to Colton: "I'm not your father."

The man who Colton White thought was his father used his last breath to reveal the truth. Throughout the rest of the story, you'll discover more about Colton's background and Ned's connection to the treasure that sunk with the *Morning Star*. Colton's relationship with Ned will ally him with a group of outsiders who know who the real villains are.



Take on Crude and the Redhand Gang

Trouble follows Colton White. After you talk to the barkeep at the Alhambra Saloon then talk to Jenny, members of Crude and Rude's Redhand gang will take the girl and try to torch the establishment. The fight will move upstairs then outside.

On your way through the Alhambra's upper floor, take cover whenever possible and use Quickdraw to find and fire at enemies with speed or use melee attacks and grab them if they're close. Save a few seconds of Quickdraw power to free Jenny from Rude. After you head downstairs again, clear the room and watch the doors for more attackers. Once outside, mount a horse and trample the villains surrounding the saloon. Return to the interior, then step outside again for a showdown with Crude's boys. Hit the assailants on the roof with rifle shots, then go after the leader with Quickdraw enabled.

Protect the Bridge from Quick Killer

Before you speak to Patrick Denton at the bridge, visit the shopkeeper to purchase a pistol speed loader and a cylinder-boring kit (for increased pistol-bullet power). The firearm improvements will aid in your battle against Quick Killer and his Apache braves.

After your first sweep across the bridge, you'll accompany a group of workers to the middle of the span. Fire the shotgun into groups of attackers. If one gets close, grab him to use him as a shield. During the final battle on the bridge, step out in front of the TNT barrels and use Quickdraw to shoot the arrows, which appear in pairs. Hit one, then hold your aim and wait for the next one to fly into your view. Blast the charging braves with the shotgun, then hit Quick Killer with shotgun fire and a Quickdraw-enabled round of pistol shots.

Gun for Hire—Talk to Townsfolk for Odd Jobs

Between main story chapters, you can develop your skills and earn cash for equipment by taking on side missions. Three of the mission types take place in the city limits of Dodge and Empire. They're marked on the map, and highlighted with floating labels on the main game screen.

Pony Express

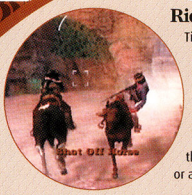
Earl in Dodge and Daryl in Empire will offer you timed delivery missions that increase your Horse stats and cash.

Poker Tournament

The Alhambra Saloon in Dodge and Hoodoo's Casino in Empire are the sites for poker tournaments where you can win cash prizes.

Law Man

Patrick Denton in Dodge and the federal marshal in Empire will dole out law-man missions for those willing to wear the badge.

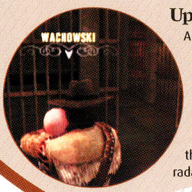


Ride Hard, Fight Rogues

Time is tight on Pony Express missions. It's of the utmost importance that you spur your horse, but watch its health meter to keep from working it too hard. If you're ambushed during a delivery, try to ride past your attackers or knock them off their horses with a gunshot or a well-timed trampling move.

Know When to Fold 'Em

When you're in a Texas Hold 'Em tournament, you've got to stay in for the long haul. A good player will fold his hand most of the time before he has money in the pot. Wait for aces and face cards, favoring combinations of the same suit, before you bet. If you've already contributed to the blinds or if you're down to one or two opponents, you can loosen up a little. When you cheat or are dealt a good hand, bet big.



Uphold the Law

A typical law-man mission consists of several consecutive fights around town. In some conflicts you'll have to protect civilians, so it pays to identify the battle participants before you open fire. Go into each mission with a powerful weapon that reloads quickly, and watch the radar to find the bad guys.

Gold, Lead and Sharper Arrows

When you're not completing story missions or side missions, there are still a few ways to take in the flavor of the Old West. Mining for gold earns you money, and visiting the Indian trader gives you an opportunity to exchange money for specialized goods that you won't find in towns.

Search for Shiny Objects

Purchase a pick axe from the shopkeeper in Dodge then search the hills and plains for gold deposits. There are 44 deposits in all, and each one will earn you dough. To reach some deposits, you'll need a horse to jump across long gaps.

Good Man Gone Bad

If you open fire on too many innocent city dwellers, they'll form a posse and fight back. The battles aren't difficult, but they are avoidable.

Bandits in the Wild

You may come across groups of bandits in your travels. If you're not on horse but the bandits are, the fight is a good opportunity to grab a ride.

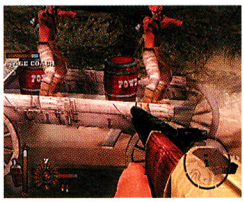
Trade with a Native

An Indian trader near Piper Lake (not far from an Indian hunter) offers arrows, arrowheads and herbs that increase your Quickdraw duration.

Lead the Way to Empire City

As soon as you talk to Jenny on the street, you'll be in for a long stagecoach escort mission to Empire. Stock up with the best weapons that you can afford before the ride—you will encounter a lot of native resistance between the two towns. Ride ahead of the coach and take out the enemies before they can do any damage.

Watch the radar map and pick off Apaches from a distance with your rifle, or get close and trample them. After the coach breaks down, look for opportunities to defeat several enemies at once by firing on TNT kegs.



You'll ride on top of the coach after its repair. Watch the road ahead through the sights of your rifle, and blast the enemies from afar. Also, target the TNT kegs on enemy wagons. Some Apaches on ledges will attempt to leap onto the coach. If they succeed, use melee attacks.

Teach Webb and Rudabaugh a Lesson

When you meet Hoodoo Brown (the mayor of Empire City), he'll offer you help in defeating Reed (the preacher who aided in the attack on the *Morning Star*) in exchange for your services as a deputy. On your mission, you'll find that Brown and his men, Rudabaugh and Webb, are not on the up and up.

Defeat Rudabaugh from a covered position inside the barn, then grab a horse and go after Webb. Hit him with shots from your rifle when he's far away, and switch to your shotgun when he's nearby.

Break out of Jail with Port and Soapy

Another visit to Hoodoo Brown's place will show you who's really running Empire and land you in jail. By talking to Port and Soapy, you'll learn how to break out: grab the deputy, pick the lock with his badge, then steal some horses and use explosives to free Soapy.

When stealing horses, sneak up on the men closest to the animals and either grab them or take them out with arrows. The bow is silent, but only a single-shot hit to the head or upper body will ensure that your target won't alert the others. Stay low and watch the radar to note enemy positions. After you use a whiskey bomb to torch the livery, sneak up to the powder shop, steal a keg and destroy the jail's wall.

Join the Resistance

After your escape from Empire, you'll fall in with Clay Allison's resistance forces and learn about Thomas Magruder's efforts to rule this section of the West. Your missions with the resistance will better acquaint you with the politics of the region.

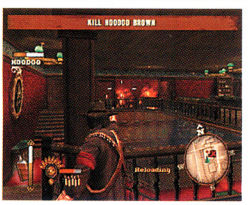
Following an assault on Magruder's train, you'll face an attack by his militia. Use your new Sharps 1874 to take out the attackers from atop the bridge, switching to your pistol in Quickdraw mode if any of the men close in on Clay. Eventually, you'll have to go after the cannon. Snipe the enemies controlling the cannon, as well as those who are close to the big gun. As you run toward the cannon, switch to Quickdraw mode to take on small groups of attackers.

In the middle of the attack, Clay will ask you to take control over the Gatling gun. Fire at a constant rate and aim at those closest to you first.

Go After Hoodoo Brown

You'll escort Port and the cannon through town. Start by picking off Hoodoo Brown's men from a distance. Then, when Port starts rolling the cannon up the street, get close to him and take on all comers with your rifle and Quickdraw-enabled pistol. You'll use the cannon to disable a counterattack at the bridge in front of Brown's place, then duck into the laundry for an underground assault.

Use your shotgun to take out the enemies in the underground passage. When you reach the blocked tunnel, move a TNT keg into the gold circle, then fire on it from afar to clear the way.



Once inside the casino, take cover behind the bar and shoot the chandeliers to set the floor and tables on fire. Move into the main room, hide behind the pillars and shoot at the enemies in the room and on the steps. Advance upstairs, clear the area, fill your flask and follow Brown to his third-floor office. A quick confrontation will end him for good.

Live the Life of the Open Plains—Hunt and Herd

Out of town and on your own, you can find the work of a lone cowboy, improving your skills and making money. Look for a chance to become a better fighter before you get deep into the story. You'll find wanted posters in the cities, but the related bounties are in the outskirts or in the hills.

Ranch Hand

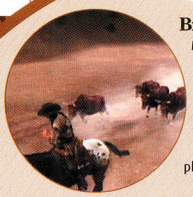
The Hecht Ranch is in the middle of the Badlands. There you can speak to the rancher to perform chores that will earn you stronger Horse stats and money.

Bounties Collected

Wanted posters make you aware of lawbreakers on the run. Most of the outlaws will net you more money if you bring them in alive.

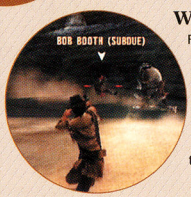
Hunting

The Indian hunter near Piper Lake will send you on hunts for specific prey. Victory will increase your fighting stats.



Bring in the Herd

Most ranch missions are fairly simple herding exercises in which you must influence the path of cattle and horses. Some slightly more difficult missions challenge you to fight off attackers from horseback by either shooting at them or trampling them.



Wanted: Dead or Alive

For increasing your Gunhand, Quickdraw and Melee stats, bounty missions are the way to go. Your goal for most bounty missions will be to take the main target alive, but you can shoot down any of the target's henchmen. If the lawbreaker is on horseback, target the horse to make it drop, throwing the rider to the ground. Stun the outlaw with a pistol shot to the arm or leg, then grab him and subdue him.

On the Hunt

Hunting missions are long-term. You may take on a mission then engage in other activities before you find the target. When you are within proximity of your prey, dismount from your horse, stay low and approach the animal slowly. If it runs, you should have time to get in at least one shot.

Free Soapy in Dodge

Soapy's on a rope, about to be hung. You'll need his safecracking skills to get the treasure from the wreckage of the *Morning Star*. Complete a few new side missions, then find Dalton tied up on the bridge into town. Follow his instructions to get Soapy out of his predicament.

After you shoot the rope, freeing Soapy, use your new sharpshooter to take out the men who converge on the gambler. Watch the radar and toggle out of your zoomed-in view to look at the big picture.

Break out of Hollister's Fort

Your attempt to reach the steamboat will land you in Sergeant Hollister's captivity. There, you'll find members of the Blackfoot tribe also held as prisoners. You'll start by saving three of the warriors from soldiers, then follow them to a passage out of the fort.

As you follow the Blackfoot, wait for their word before you attack the guards. After you collect a bow in the cave, wait for the guards to separate from the group, then hit them with head or upper-body shots one at a time.

Attack the Fort with the Blackfoot

A visit to a Blackfoot village will answer some questions about Colton's past and result in a pact with the natives to take Hollister's fort. You will be outmanned. Save your ammunition for enemies that pose the biggest threat. You'll start by rushing to the canoes, then enter the cave by force. Use your rifle in the battle.

Inside the fort, take over the Gatling guns to pick off large numbers of enemies, then go after the cannons. You'll use the first two cannons to destroy bunkers then keelboats, and the third to blast an ammo dump. During your attack on the last cannon, toss dynamite sticks across the gap. If you need more dynamite, grab another batch downstairs.

Defeat Hollister and Reed

Hollister will escape the fort and head for the *Morning Star*. You'll track him down before he reaches the steamboat wreckage on a rocky piece of land. That's where he'll make his last stand. After you defeat him you'll reach the boat, where you'll fight Reed and collect the treasure.

Hollister is strong and his weapons are powerful. Smoke him out by tossing a stick of dynamite in his direction, then use a boulder for cover and run around the rock so he never gets a clear shot on you. When you see him, blast him with your shotgun.

With his last burst of energy, Hollister will try to take you with him, sky high via a vest of dynamite. Fire at him before he gets too close. After he explodes, grab Ned's Ferguson rifle from the body and head for the boat to take on the next group of enemies.

Magruder's riders will attack you at the steamboat. Knock one of them off his horse with a rifle blast, then mount the horse and stay on it while you fight the rest of the group. Use Quickdraw sparingly—you'll need it to fight Reed.

After Soapy opens the safe, Reed will show up on horseback. Mount your own horse again and chase him. He'll try to keep away from you then charge at you to attack. When you're not attacking him, he can replenish his energy. Hit him with rifle fire when he's far away, then switch to Quickdraw mode and shoot him with your pistol when he's close.

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FOR THE NINTENDO GAMECUBE™

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NOVEMBER 2005

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TEEN T Cartoon Violence Suggestive Themes CONTENT RATED BY ESRB

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VIRTUAL VICTORY!

>POKéMON XD: GALE OF DARKNESS

Realgam Tower has done quite a bit of remodeling since its Colosseum days. Among its new additions are the Battle CD challenges. Check out our coverage and learn how to become a pro Battle CD Trainer.

Prepare to Fight

TYPECASTING

Most of the Battle CD challenges will test your knowledge of Pokémon types. If you don't have a type chart handy, consult the Strategy Memo in your P★DA—if you have seen a Pokémon before, you can look up its strengths and weaknesses.

ALL THE RIGHT MOVES

Before you go into battle, check out the moves of your Pokémon, as well as those of your opponent's Pokémon. The designers of the Battle CD challenges take wily glee in giving enemy Pokémon unorthodox moves, so be prepared.

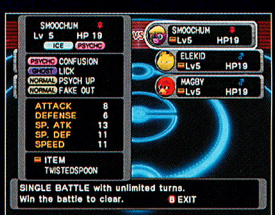
TAKE YOUR TIME

Most of the Battle CD challenges last only a few rounds, limiting your chances to execute complex combos. The opposing Pokémon will always attack with the same moves in the same order—memorize the order in case you have to repeat a battle challenge.

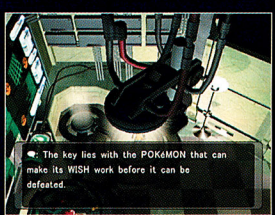
HEADLINE NEWS

When you're selecting which Battle CD challenge to use, look for a clue below the CD's title. It will usually give you a quick hint about the type of battle you're about to face.

Before selecting a Battle CD, you'll have an opportunity to examine the Pokémon you'll bring into battle. You can also find out which Pokémon you'll be up against, as well as their types and moves. Pay particular attention to each Pokémon's Speed—knowing which Pokémon will go first in each round is vital in limited-round challenges.



If you're unable to win a challenge, listen to the Battle CD attendant afterward. She'll give you a clue about how to win the challenge. She won't spell out every move step by step, however—you'll have to incorporate your own experience from previous battles to make better use of her sometimes-cryptic messages.



Find All Fifty

You'll have to do a lot of exploring, as well as quite a bit of Trainer battling, to find all of the Battle CDs, but you can purchase some of them in Realgam Tower for 1,000 Poké Dollars each. Some of the Battle CDs can be found only after you have finshed certain parts of the story. There are 50 in all; as a reward for winning all the Battle CD challenges, you'll receive 15,000 Poké Coupons. Trade in your Poké Coupons at Mt. Battle for valuable items and TMs.

Battle Chart Key

Cannot be found until you free Phenac City.

Cannot be found until you upgrade your scooter.

Cannot be found until you first encounter Team Snagem.

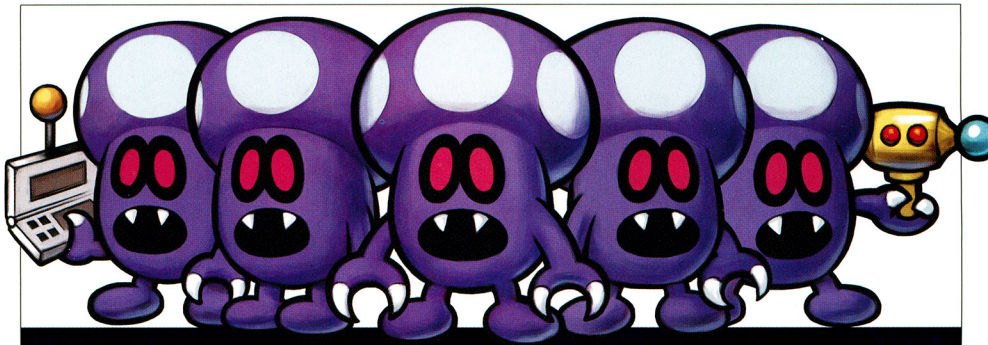
Cannot be found until you clear the Cipher Key Lair.

Cannot be found until you've visited Citadark Isle for the first time.

Cannot be found until you have defeated Cipher.

Pokémon XD Battle CD Chart

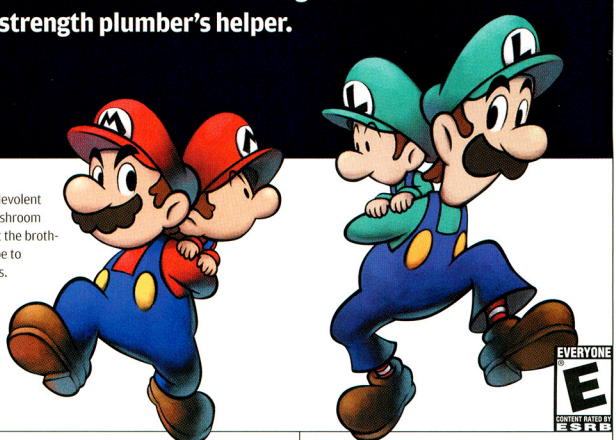
NO.	TITLE	PLAYER POKéMON	ENEMY POKéMON	CD LOCATION
01	Flying vs. Flying	Pidgeot	Tropius	Phenac City
02	Skill over Power	Wartortle	Drowzee	Realgam Tower (purchase)
03	Exploit Seams!	Quagsire/Ludicolo	Vileplume/Skarmory	Realgam Tower (purchase)
04	Plusle and Minun	Plusle/Minun	Miltank/Tropius	Realgam Tower (purchase)
05	Offense Is the Greatest Defense	Blissey	Medicham	Kaminko's house
06	Dreams Come True	Sneasel/Pikachu/Snorlax	Primeape	Gateon Port
07	Machamp's Macho Romp	Machamp	Aggron	Phenac City
08	Zangoose vs. Cradily	Zangoose	Cradily	Phenac City
09	Color Change Carnival	Aerodactyl/Hitmonchan/Girafarig/Hariyama	Kecleon	Realgam Tower (purchase)
10	Friends from the Moon	Clefairy/Clefable	Aggron	Phenac City
11	One-Hit Wonders	Cacturne/Magcargo	Shedinja x6	Kaminko's house
12	Heracross Bide-a-thon	Heracross	Swellow	Phenac City
13	What Is Porygon Anyway?	Porygon	Spinda	Realgam Tower (purchase)
14	Whomp That Wobbuffet!	Skitty/Roselia	Wobbuffet	Agate Village
15	A Salute to Meteorologists	Castform	Torkoal/Shedinja/Gyarados	Phenac City
16	Slowpoke Family Feud	Sharpedo/Misdreavus	Slowpoke/Slowbro/Slowking	Phenac City
17	The Rattata That Roared	Rattata	Shuckle	Realgam Tower (purchase)
18	Farfetch'd Substitute	Nincada	Farfetch'd	*S.S. Libra*
19	Volcanic Reaction	Rhydon/Golem/Swellow/Flareon	Muk/Manectric/Gengar	Phenac City
20	Let Slip the Houndoom!	Salamence/Dusclops/Houndoom	Wobbuffet/Banette/Wynaut	Phenac City
21	Focus Punch Face-Off!	Breloom/Clefable	Swellow/Meowth/Mankey	Pyrite Town
22	Banette and Plusle	Banette/Plusle	Gyarados/Zangoose	Pyrite Town
23	Aerodactyl vs. Kyogre	Aerodactyl	Kyogre	Kaminko's house
24	Batter Down Protection!	Manectric/Plusle/Ninetales	Scizor/Hitmonlee/Muk	Pyrite Town
25	Vigoroth Twosome!	Vigoroth x2	Ninjask/Clefable/Ursaring	Realgam Tower (purchase)
26	A Slaking Pair	Slaking x2/Exploud	Kecleon/Blissey/Dusclops	Realgam Tower (purchase)
27	Big Bang, Sorry	Porygon2/Hitmonlee	Graveler/Dusclops	Phenac City
28	Bomb Squad	Feraligatr/Furret	Ariados/Xatu/Electrode/Psyduck	Phenac City
29	Madcap Magikarp!	Smeargle/Spheal/Poliwhirl	Magikarp x3	Kaminko's house
30	Shedinja and Raticate	Shedinja/Raticate	Meditite/Medicham	Realgam Tower (purchase)
31	Donphan Doldrums	Donphan/Starmie/Blaziken/Electrode/ Ninetales/Metagross	Magneton/Rhydon/Manectric/Magcargo /Aggron/Victreebel	Citadark Island
32	Survive Big Booms!	Chikorita/Cyndaquil/Totodile	Smoochum/Elekid/Magby	Phenac City
33	Cutie Pokémon Concerto Side A	Smoochum/Elekid/Magby	Chikorita/Cyndaquil/Totodile	Pokémon HQ Lab
34	Cutie Pokémon Concerto Side B	Cleffa/Togepi	Geodude/Machop	Realgam Tower (purchase)
35	Metronome Cup	Linoone/Alakazam/Dusclops/Aggron	Gengar/Electrode/Shedinja/Shuckle	Phenac City
36	The King of Fighting Types Side A	Blaziken/Breloom/Machamp	Poliwrath/Hitmonchan/Hariyama	Pyrite Town
37	The King of Fighting Types Side B	Poliwrath/Hitmonchan/Hariyama	Blaziken/Breloom/Machamp	Realgam Tower (purchase)
38	Fossil Fandango Side A	Lileep/Anorith/Cradily/Armaldo	Omastar/Kabutops/Omanyte/Kabuto	Pyrite Town
39	Fossil Fandango Side B	Omastar/Kabutops/Omanyte/Kabuto	Lileep/Anorith/Cradily/Armaldo	Realgam Tower (purchase)
40	Kanto vs. Hoenn Side A	Venusaur/Charizard/Blastoise	Sceptile/Blaziken/Swampert	Pyrite Town
41	Kanto vs. Hoenn Side B	Sceptile/Blaziken/Swampert	Venusaur/Charizard/Blastoise	Realgam Tower (purchase)
42	Articuno, Zapdos, & Moltres Side A	Suicune/Entei/Raikou	Zapdos/Moltres/Articuno	Cipher Lab
43	Articuno, Zapdos, & Moltres Side B	Zapdos/Moltres/Articuno	Raikou/Entei/Suicune	Realgam Tower (purchase)
44	Regirock, Regice, & Registeel Side A	Raikou/Entei/Suicune	Regirock/Regice/Registeel	Phenac City
45	Regirock, Regice, & Registeel Side B	Regirock/Regice/Registeel	Raikou/Entei/Suicune	Realgam Tower (purchase)
46	Operation Zero	Eevee/Vaporeon/Jolteon/Flareon/Umbreon /Espeon	Mew	Citadark Island
47	The Ultimate! Latias & Latios Side A	Lugia/Ho-Oh	Latias/Latios	Cipher Key Lair
48	The Ultimate! Latias & Latios Side B	Latias/Latios	Lugia/Ho-Oh	Realgam Tower (purchase)
49	Legendary Pokémon Challenge 1	Jumpluff/Ninjask	Groudon/Shiftry	Kaminko's house
50	Legendary Pokémon Challenge 2	Quagsire/Lanturn	Kyogre/Kingdra	Kaminko's house



THE SHROOB IS OUT THERE

Need help fending off the alien invaders in Mario & Luigi: Partners in Time? Think of us as an industrial-strength plumber's helper.

By Steve Thomason (and baby Steve)



Mario and Luigi must travel back in time to stop a malevolent race of aliens called the Shroobs from taking over the Mushroom Kingdom. So vicious are the extraterrestrial invaders that the brothers will have to team up with their baby selves if they hope to stand a chance. It's enough to make a hero mess his pants. Don't worry, though; our boss strategies will show you how to conquer the would-be conquerers. We'll even help you find some new trousers.

EVERYONE E CONTENT RATED BY ESRB

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ATTACKING

JUMP

To deal extra damage during a jump, press the attack button just before you land on the enemy. If an adult and baby are paired up, press the toddler's attack button first, then the grown-up's.

HAMMER

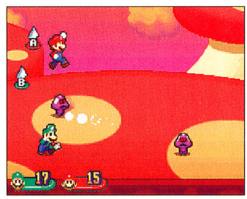
For max damage with the hammer, press the attack button just as the baby starts to vibrate. If he's teamed with his older self, press the adult's attack button to give the baby a boost before swinging.

BROS. ITEMS

Bros. Items enable a variety of special attacks. Each one works a bit differently, so be sure to read the tutorial displayed on the upper screen when you highlight an item. Used correctly, Bros. Items can be incredibly powerful.

DEFENDING

Defending the brothers against enemy attacks requires carefully timed button presses. Icons in the upper-left corner of the bottom screen will indicate whether the bros need to jump or use their hammers to defend against the incoming attack. If you time your defense correctly, you can even counterattack certain foes to deal damage.



SHAMELESS PLUG FOR THE PLAYER'S GUIDE

Don't cry! You can find more great strategies in the Official Mario & Luigi: Partners in Time Player's Guide, sold at finer bookstores and game outlets everywhere.

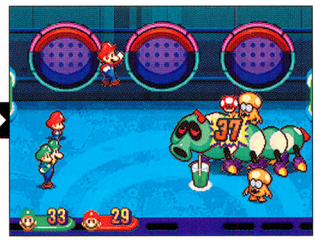
visit nintendods.com/marioandluigi

BOSSES

As you'll see, the bulk of our strategies focus on defense. The best means of attacking almost all bosses is simply to use the most powerful Bros. Items at your disposal.

VIM FACTORY: SWIGGLER

Swiggler is flanked by two Dr. Shroobs who behave the same as those you encounter earlier in the factory. When one of them pulls out a grey mushroom, hit him to poison Swiggler's drink. After the overgrown caterpillar takes a swig, he will turn green and be vulnerable to attack. Striking Swiggler when he's not poisoned deals minimal damage and causes the boss to counterattack with a series of three shockwaves that the bros will have to jump over. If you hit a Dr. Shroob while he's holding a red mushroom, it will turn Swiggler's drink into a health potion, replenishing his HP. Should Swiggler take a gulp from a mushroom-free drink, he'll power up a pair of UFOs on the upper screen. The top one fires at Mario, the bottom one fires at Luigi. Jump over the blasts as they come into the bottom screen.

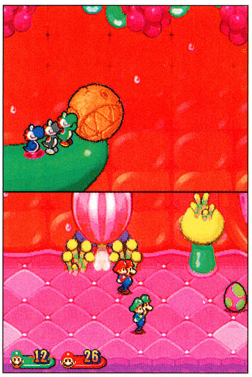


YOSHI'S ISLAND: KAMEK

Kamek will create four clones of himself throughout the battle. Only the real Kamek will take damage; hitting one of the doppelgangers will simply cause it to disappear. All of the clones look identical, so finding the boss is a process of elimination. If Kamek sends a flame toward one of the brothers, jump over it then prepare to bonk the charging boss with a hammer. His other means of attack is to drop objects on the bros from the sky. If he drops a spiked ball, hammer it back at him to deal damage. If he drops a mushroom, let it fall and heal your character (if you hit the mushroom back at Kamek, it will replenish some of his HP).

YOOB'S BELLY: SUNNYCIDE

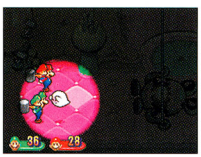
Your first objective is to smash the eggs surrounding Sunnycide to liberate the Yoshis inside. When you've freed five of the dinosaurs, they'll push a boulder over a ledge and into the boss, knocking him over and exposing his weak point to stomp attacks. While he's on his back, Sunnycide will occasionally turn out the lights and send a Boo after the heroes. Watch for which tentacle he uses to pull the cord; the right tentacle means he's going after Mario, the left tentacle means he's going after Luigi. The same holds true when he yanks on the chain: whichever tentacle he uses will cause a void to open beneath the corresponding brother. Eventually, the boss will get back to his feet. Start smashing eggs again to start the process over.



You'll need five Yoshis to get the boulder over the precipice. Evidentally there's not much strength in those stubby little arms.

If Sunnycide tries to suck a brother in, pull the hammer back and bop the boss when he's within range.

Before he hurls an egg, the boss will use a targeting reticle to identify who he's attacking.



Hammer the Boo before it mugs one of the heroes or the ghost will steal an item.

When Sunnycide pulls the chain, prepare to jump as soon as the floor starts to wobble.

GRITZY DESERT: SHROOBOID BRAT

The crowd on the upper screen will choose the Shrooboid Brat's next target by holding up signs. When the boss raises his lollipop overhead, jump with whichever character got more votes. Later, the audience will start dropping items into the Brat's gaping maw. Which sign an item passes over in the crowd indicates which brother it will target. Note, however, that the boss coughs up the items in reverse order; the item he devoured last will be the one he upchucks first. Also, if he consumes a mushroom, he'll actually hurl a poison mushroom your way and vice versa. Hammer the poison mushrooms back at him and snarf down the regular mushrooms to restore your HP. Sometimes, the Shrooboid Brat will consume a Fire Flower; deflect the resulting fireball just as you would a poison mushroom.

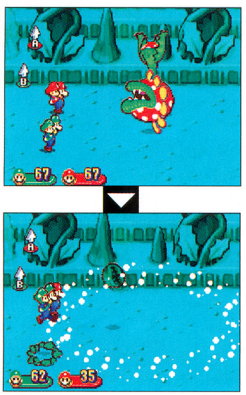
The crowd will sometimes cast multiple votes in a row, so be prepared to dodge consecutive strikes. Also, be sure to keep an eye on the letters; some tricky members of the audience will change the colors of their signs, but it's the letters that determine the target.

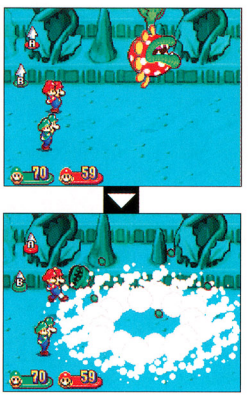
GRITZY CAVES: PETEY PIRANHA

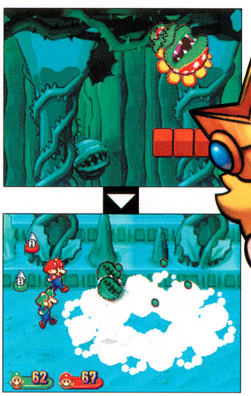
Petey uses different attacks depending on whether he's above ground or below. While the boss is topside, he'll leap into the air and cause a pair of boulders to fall on the heroes. If he's upside down and facing the bros when he lands, the first boulder will head toward Luigi and the second toward Mario. Jump with the brothers in quick succession to hurdle the rocks. If he's facing away from the bros when he lands, the first boulder will target Mario and the second will head for Luigi. If Petey does a few somersaults before touching down, the boulders will bounce toward the bros simultaneously. While Petey is underground, he'll try to pull Mario and Luigi into a sinkhole or smack them with a swinging pendulum. To avoid the sinkhole, jump quickly and repeatedly with both bros. To break the pendulum, alternate between bros using hammer strikes.

A red or green block appears on the upper screen to indicate the pendulum's initial target.

When Petey tries to suck Mario and Luigi into a sinkhole, keep jumping until it dissipates.

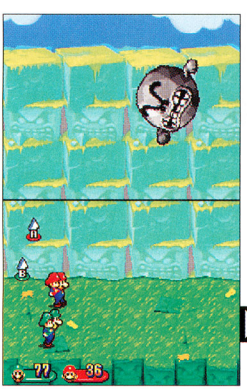




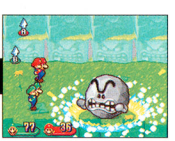


THWOMP VOLCANO: MRS. THWOMP

When Mrs. Thwomp starts rolling boulders, watch her positioning to determine which brother she's aiming at, and smash the rock with the corresponding bro's hammer (if she's between Mario and Luigi, she'll roll a boulder harmlessly between them). When the boss jumps into the air, count how many times she spins. If she comes down after three rotations, she'll land in the center and you'll have to jump over the resulting shockwave with both brothers simultaneously. If she spins six times, she'll land near Mario, so jump with him first, then Luigi. If she spins nine times, jump with Luigi first, then Mario. Occasionally, Mrs. Thwomp will split into four smaller rocks. Each one will reveal who it's going to attack by raising an eyebrow: the right for Mario and the left for Luigi. Be ready to counterattack with the hammers. Note that only one of the rocks is the real Mrs. Thwomp.



Some of the rolling boulders will produce items if you smash them.



Only striking the real Mrs. Thwomp will reduce the boss's HP. Each of the doppelgangers contains a Goomba (?) that will simply scurry away if you do enough damage.

THWOMP VOLCANO: BOWSER AND BABY BOWSER

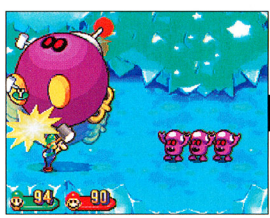
Bowser and his wee counterpart have a wide range of attacks. The elder Koopa will stomp the ground, sending out a shockwave that both bros must jump over. Afterward, a Thwack may fall from the ceiling: note the color of the shockwave and prepare to jump with the corresponding brother (pink for Mario, green for Luigi and yellow for both). If Bowser stands in front of Mario or Luigi, jump right after he inhales to avoid the boss's fire breath (expect a delay if he grins first). Sometimes Bowser will toss his young cohort into the air and spew a fireball when the baby Koopa lands. Which direction the tyke spins indicates who Bowser will target: counter-clockwise for Mario and clockwise for Luigi. Should Baby Bowser fly off the screen, the big kahuna will shoot fireballs at both brothers simultaneously. When Baby Bowser attacks (either by golfing Bowser or launching fireballs), watch how he holds his hammer—overhand, he's going after Mario; underhand, he's aiming for Luigi.

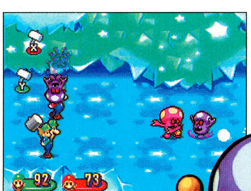
Bowser's shockwaves travel at varying speeds, so stay on your toes.

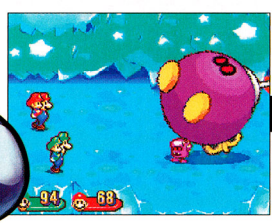
Quickly identifying which direction Baby Bowser is spinning before looking back at the bottom screen can be a bit disorienting.

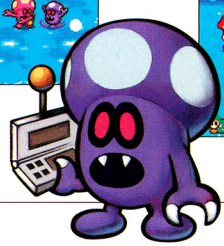
STAR HILL: COMMANDER SHROOB

The Support Shroobs will either rush the bros one by one (jump) or toss the Shroob-omb at them (hit the bomb back and forth, alternating between brothers until it explodes). To force the Commander Shroob onscreen, make the bomb roll backward by eliminating the two rightmost grunts. When the boss starts spinning Support Shroobs at the heroes, he'll face away from you if he's aiming for Mario and toward you if he's aiming for Luigi. When he tosses a Shroob into the air, ready Mario's hammer if the enemy falls feet-first and Luigi's if it falls head-first.









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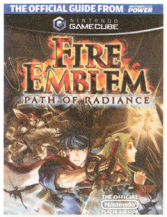

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PLAYER'S POLL SWEEPSTAKES
January 2006, Volume 199

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A. How old are you?
1. Under 6 **2.** 6-9 **3.** 10-12
4. 13-16 **5.** 17-24 **6.** 25 or older

B. Sex
1. Male **2.** Female

C. Which of the following statements best describes your feelings about the Nintendo Wi-Fi Connection?
1. It sounds great, and I can't wait to try it.
2. It sounds interesting, but I'd like to know more about it.
3. I don't have a broadband connection at home, so I don't think it's for me.
4. I don't own a Nintendo DS, but I plan on getting one now.
5. I don't think it sounds very good.
6. It sounds okay, but I'd like to see more Wi-Fi-compatible games.
7. I have no opinion.

D. Which of the following statements most closely reflects your feelings about this month's Final Fantasy IV preview?
1. I love everything about Final Fantasy games. Bring it on!
2. I loved the art and screenshots, but there wasn't as much information as I wanted.
3. The information was interesting, but the art and screenshots didn't do anything for me.
4. I plan to play the game, but I didn't find the preview interesting.
5. I don't plan to play the game, and I didn't find the preview interesting.
6. I haven't read the preview yet, but I intend to read it.

E. Which game franchise would you most like to see adapted to Wi-Fi play? (Choose one.)
1. The Legend of Zelda **2.** Pokémon **3.** F-Zero
4. Final Fantasy **5.** Super Smash Bros. **6.** Mario Baseball
7. Madden NFL

F. How many Nintendo products have you purchased or received in the past 12 months?
1. More than 3 **2.** 3 **3.** 2
4. 1 **5.** None

G. How many Nintendo products have you registered online at My Nintendo?
1. More than 3 **2.** 3 **3.** 2
4. 1 **5.** None

H. How satisfied are you with this issue?
1. Very satisfied **2.** Somewhat satisfied **3.** Somewhat dissatisfied
4. Very dissatisfied

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STAR TEMPLE: ELDER SHROOBOID

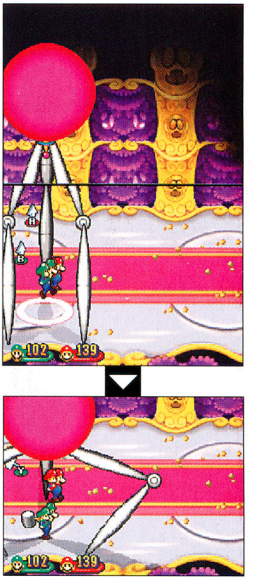
The Elder Shrooboid will hurl fireballs that appear in his right hand at Mario and those that appear in his left hand at Luigi. To fend off the boss when he charges at one of the bros, hit him repeatedly with the hammer. His ball-and-chain attack is a bit more complex. Jump rapidly with both brothers to escape the gold crystals, jump over the ball with whoever's insignia appears on it, then jump with the other brother as the Shroobid stumbles. After taking enough damage, the boss will grow, and will release a UFO with a countdown timer on it. If the countdown reaches zero, it's game over. Use the spiked balls that the Shrooboid hurls at the bros to knock the saucer out of the sky. Mario's hammer will launch the balls diagonally, and Luigi's will send them straight up.

PEACH'S CASTLE: PRINCESS SHROOB

You can't hurt Princess Shroob until you take out the force field surrounding her (Copy Flowers work well). While she's protected, she can transform her throne into a robot walker that will stand over one of the bros and fire energy rings down at him. Jump to avoid them, then hit the walker with the same brother's hammer when the princess tries to squish him. Her force field also enables her to fire dual cannons. The upper one shoots at Mario, and the lower one targets Luigi. If a cannon is aiming down, jump over the blast with the corresponding character. If it aims up, stay on the ground and let the shot pass overhead. Once you've destroyed the force field, Princess Shroob will toss a purple star at the heroes. It will circle round and round, picking up speed until one of them jumps on it or gets hit. She also has energy balls at her disposal. If she appears in front of a brother, she'll fire a single shot at him. If she appears between Mario and Luigi, she'll unleash a wave that both heroes must jump over in quick succession. She can teleport to the top screen, as well, and attack from above. When she does, hammer the energy balls back at her.

Try to jump on the purple star right away; it will only get faster as it starts to circle.

The laser cannons target independently, so you'll have to keep an eye on both of them.



After you jump through the engery rings with Mario or Luigi, ready the same brother's hammer immediately.

It's not over yet. A few final battles remain for Mario, Luigi and the babies. If you use the strategies you've learned from reading this article, you'll rid the Mushroom Kingdom of Shroobs for good.

GEAR

To defeat the Shroobs, you'll need the proper equipment. The following charts list every piece of gear in the game. Note that some items won't go on sale in the castle shop until you progress to a certain point. Also, the secret shop is located in the sewers beneath Peach's Castle. Beware: the shopkeep has fury.

CLOTHING

NAME	DESCRIPTION	LOCATION
100-Point Pants	HP +10/POW +20/DEF +100/ SPEED +20/STACHE +20	Shroob Rex (Enemy)
Adult Trousers	DEF +50/SPEED +10/STACHE +5	Koopaseum
Block Trousers	DEF +70	Thwomp Volcano
Branded Slacks	DEF +35	Castle Shop
Egg Pants	DEF +38	Castle Shop
Golden Pants	DEF +48	Thwomp Volcano
Heart Pants	HP +10/DEF +30	Yoshi's Island
Muscle Slacks	POW +20	Gritzy Caves Shop
Mushroom Jeans	HP +15/DEF +55	Toad Town Shop
Para Slacks	DEF +110/SPEED +80	Toad Town
Patched Slacks	DEF +20	Castle Shop
Preferred Pants	DEF +25	Castle Shop
Puffy Trousers	HP +10/DEF +40	Yoob's Belly
Rocket Jeans	POW +20/DEF +80/STACHE +10	Peach's Castle (Past)
Royal Pants	DEF +75	Castle Shop
Royal Trousers	DEF +120	Castle Shop
Secret Jeans	DEF +34/SPEED +10/STACHE +5	Gritzy Desert
Shell Slacks	DEF +60	Castle Shop
Shroom Slacks	HP +20/DEF +90	Toad Town Shop
Silky Pants	DEF +6	Start of the Game
Space Trousers	POW +30/DEF +130/STACHE +20	Peach's Castle (Past)
Stache Jeans	DEF +70/STACHE +40	Star Temple
Star Trousers	POW +15/DEF +95	Toad Town Shop
Starchy Jeans	DEF +12	Castle Shop
Stardust Pants	POW +10/DEF +65	Toad Town Shop
Supreme Slacks	HP+30/POW +30/DEF +150/ SPEED +30/STACHE +30	Shroobsworth (Enemy)
Svelte Slacks	HP+20/SPEED +20/STACHE +10	Gritzy Caves Shop
Thrilling Pants	POW +15	Gritzy Caves Shop
Tissue Pants	HP +15/SPEED +15/STACHE +5	Gritzy Caves Shop
Unarmed Jeans	POW +5	Toadwood Forest
Wafer Slacks	DEF +10	Start of the Game
Wild Trousers	POW +5	Toadwood Forest

BADGES

NAME	DESCRIPTION	LOCATION
1-Chance Badge	Greatly increase the power of the first attack in battle.	Secret Shop
Big-DEF Badge	Get a "GREAT" when using an attack item and temporarily boost defense.	Gritzy Desert*
Big-POW Badge	Get a "GREAT" when using an attack item and temporarily power up.	Gritzy Caves*
Cash-Back Badge	Receive half the price of the items used in battle after battle.	Gritzy Desert*
Coin Badge	Increase coins received when you use attack items to defeat enemies.	Castle Shop
Coin Badge A	Greaty increase coins received when you defeat enemies with attack items!	Secret Shop
Counter Badge	Increase damage done with counterattacks. Thwomp Volcano*	
Cure Badge	Recover a few HP each turn.	Castle Shop
Cure Badge A	Recover lots of HP each turn!	Castle Shop
DEF-Peak Badge	Temporarily decrease damage taken! . . . When time runs out, you faint.	Gritzy Caves Shop
Dire-Free Badge	Use as many attack items as you like when you have less than 1/4 HP left.	Gritzy Caves**
Dire-POW Badge	Do tremendous damage when you have less than 1/4 HP left.	Toad Town**
Drain Badge	Recover a few HP depending on how many times you damage the foe.	Yoob's Belly*
Drain Badge A	Recover lots of HP depending on how many times you damage the foe!	Shroob Mother Ship*
Dynamic Badge	Boost attack-item power, but use two items per attack.	Thwomp Volcano
Dynamic Badge A	Massively boost attack-item power, but use four items per attack.	Toad Town
Easy Badge	Simplify attack-item commands.	Castle Shop
EXP Badge	Increase EXP received when you defeat enemies with attack items.	Castle Shop
EXP Badge A	Greatly increase EXP received when you defeat enemies with attack items!	Secret Shop
Hit-Free Badge	Use as many attack items as you like until you take damage!	Star Temple
Hit-POW Badge	Maintain a powered-up state until you take damage.Koopaseum	
Item-Fan Badge	Increase attack-item power, but decrease jump and hammer power.	Peach's Castle
Lucky Badge	Make lucky hits easier to land.	Thwomp Volcano
Lucky Badge A	Make lucky hits much easier to land!	Peach's Castle (past)
Pep Badge	Become impervious to all status effects.Koopaseum*	
POW-Peak Badge	Temporarily increase attack power! . . . When time runs out, you faint.	Thwomp Volcano**
Pummel Badge	Possibly defeat enemy when initiating battle with a hammer strike.	Secret Shop
Risk Badge	The fewer Mushrooms you have, the more damage you deal.	Gritzy Desert***
Rough Badge	Greatly increase all damge . . . both given and received.	Secret Shop
Safety Badge	Greatly decrease all damage . . . both given and received.	Toad Town Shop
Salvage Badge	Get a very slight chance of collecting items used in battle after battle.	Castle Shop
Salvage Badge A	Get a high chance of collecting items used in battle after battle.	Toad Town Shop
Shroom Badge	Slightly increase points recovered by using Mushrooms in battle.	Yoshi's Island*
Shroom Badge A	Greatly increase points recovered by using Mushrooms in battle.	Star Temple*
Simple Badge	The smaller your stock of an attack item, the more damage it'll deal.	Thwomp Volcano (Minigame)
Stomp Badge	Increase damage power when jumping on an enemy to initiate battle.	Secret Shop
Training Badge	Use as many attack items as you like, but lose a lot of power. For practice.	Peach's Castle*
Treasure Badge	Defeat enemies with items and get the items they were using!	Secret Shop
Ulti-Free Badge	No matter how many attack items you use, your stock stays the same!	Secret Shop
Wallet Badge	Drop almost no coins when fleeing from battle.Toadwood Forest*	

*Also available in the Castle Shop
**Also available in the Gritzy Cave Shop
***Also available in the Toad Town Shop

ELF BOWLING 1&2

Santa says:
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Two holiday classics in one package!

Coming in November 2005!

Elf Bowling 1 –

Strap on your best bowling skates and polish up your shiny Christmas ball. It's time to save Christmas from those greedy little union elves. Help Santa show those elves what the true meaning of "strike" is!

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The snickering elves are back with Santa, but there is a new twist as Santa's ne'er-do-well brother, Dingle Kringle, joins Santa and the Elves on a cruise ship headed for an island adventure. Compete in a crazy shuffleboard tournament, with the Elves serving as "pucks" and providing their own special, colorful commentary.

Available for Nintendo DS™ and Game Boy® Advance

Black Lantern Studios, Inc.

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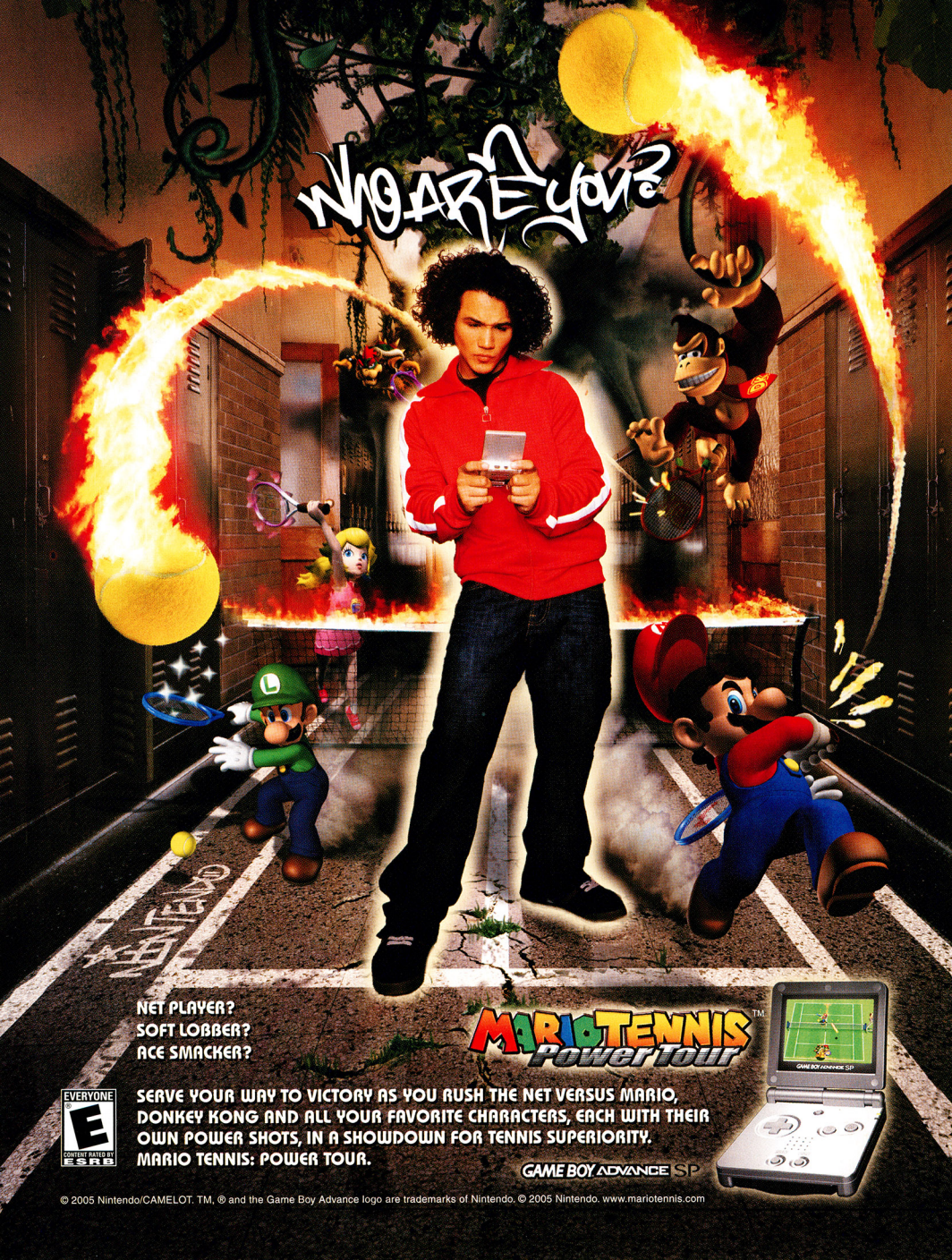

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REVIEWS

In-depth reviews of the latest games

Fire a shell in Seattle and it hits in Seoul. Mario Kart DS has gone global.

Gun, Mario Party 7, True Crime: New York City and more.

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Bond sends you love from Russia.

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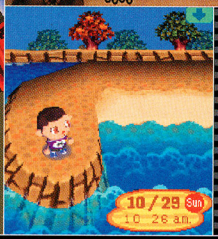
From Wasteland to Skåland—the DS has Tony Hawk in 3-D.



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Animal Crossing's Wild World expands on the DS.

GO KART!

MARIO KART DS

RATING: 9.0

PLATFORM: NINTENDO DS
PUBLISHER: NINTENDO
DEVELOPER: NINTENDO
ESRB: EVERYONE

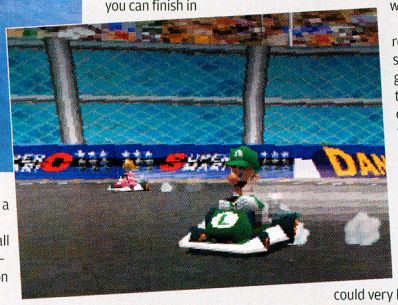
You can basically ignore the above score. It's a reckless, base representation of my regard for this game. I know you're going to love this game as much as I do, and there's no reason to assume that my score should change your decision to buy it or not buy it. Buy it. A game like Mario Kart DS doesn't deserve to be pinched into some conventional scoring system; it deserves better. After over a decade of unquestionable greatness, Mario Kart has earned its place in the pantheon of multiplayer gaming—so much that criticism of every new title seems like a defilement of some sacred shrine. So, although there are indeed flaws in this most recent iteration, they are definitely not enough to deter you from loving every minute of the game.

Make no mistake: Mario Kart DS does not rest on its laurels. An abundance of new modes and items plus 16 brand-new tracks build greatly on the core game that you are probably already familiar with. This game is not a rehash of previous games in the series. And don't think of the classic courses as filler—consider them extra content you wouldn't get with a typical racing game. The graphics exceed all expectations, as well—the visual presentation of the levels, vehicles and cinematics approaches that of the N64. Even the courses rendered originally for the GCN are impressive on the DS.

Kart doesn't rely heavily on the DS's touch screen, but just like recent games such as Castlevania: Dawn of Sorrow and Tony Hawk's: American Sk8land, the game makes it hard to fathom how you could ever have played without a persistent map. The extra real estate the second screen provides for things like player position and lap times allows the upper screen to remain relatively uncluttered. The dual-screen usage isn't groundbreaking—other racing games for the DS have used the dual screens similarly—but Kart fans will notice the incredible difference it makes.

By far the most significant use of the DS's unique features is the game's wireless eight-way LAN multiplayer action—it's the kind of stuff that we've been wishing and talking about since the early '90s. It's even better than imagined—sitting with friends and slugging out race after race will turn day into night, and then back again. Mario Kart: Super Circuit for the Game Boy Advance touched on some of the fun that a handheld platform could offer, and the ease of connectivity and the surprisingly high-quality graphics take the experience to a new level. The multiplayer element is better than ever, and for a franchise whose hallmark is party gaming, that's saying something.

Mario Kart's single-player modes cater to virtually every type of gamer, whether you're a hard-core road rager demanding perfection on every turn, or a leisurely Sunday driver looking for a quick go around the track. For example, you can finish in



first place in Grand Prix mode with only basic driving skills, but a rating system that monitors how you performed in areas such as overall time, boosts and weapon usage also grades you on your racing performance. Those grades correlate to your online persona—if you drive perfectly in single-player outings, more stars will appear next to your name during Wi-Fi play. The same wide appeal applies to the new Mission modes—simply completing the objectives in a minimal amount of time will open the next level, but true Kart masters can unlock extra Mission-mode challenges.

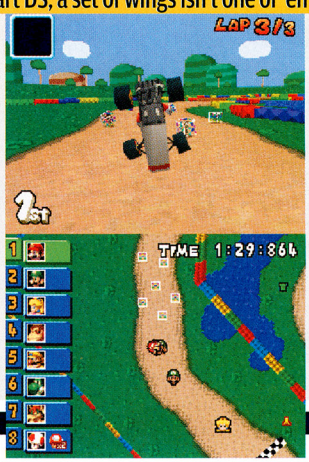
Despite its greatness, Mario Kart isn't perfect. The online experience is a nice addition, but once you get used to the eight-way mayhem of local LAN play, the more limited Wi-Fi four-player contests feel a little sparse. That might be looking a gift horse in the mouth, particularly because it's already difficult to get eight players in a room, all with DS systems (unless you work at Nintendo, of course). Also, to really get something out of Wi-Fi play, you need to have friends online at the same time as you, something you have to establish in advance. It's a minor inconvenience and one that online gamers are used to, but it will probably occur over and over again. Finally, not all of the tracks are available for online races, which is disappointing.

The franchise has retained several nuisances that just aren't going to go away. First, there seems to be a disconnect between performance and results, particularly in grand prix action. No matter how deftly you perform power slides and turbo boosts, how proficiently you use weapons or how acrobatically you dodge obstacles, you could very likely finish well out of first place. It's indescribably frustrating to lose on the final race of a cup because at the end of the last lap a blue shell hurled from the back of the pack slugged you. I have to admit that I'd throw that shell if I were bringing up the rear, but only because I can—not because I should.

There have been a lot of great titles out for the DS so far, but there hasn't been one game that I'd recommend to everyone equally, until now. Mario Kart DS will be in your DS for a long, long time.

—CHRIS S.

Of the cool new items you can get in Mario Kart DS, a set of wings isn't one of 'em.



WRITERS' BLOCK

WHAT SERIES WOULD YOU LIKE TO SEE UTILIZE THE WI-FI CONNECTION?

Mario Kart, Tony Hawk and Animal Crossing have gone Wi-Fi, and Metroid Prime: Hunters is on the way. Our reviewers dream about other Wi-Fi franchises.

CHRIS HOFFMAN

Nothing blurs the line between cooperation and competition like The Legend of Zelda: Four Swords. It seems perfect for Wi-Fi.

STEVEN GRIMM

With Wi-Fi going live, it's time for a MMORPG. EarthBound would be perfect for an expansive, endlessly surprising 2-D world on the DS.

CHRIS SHEPPERD

I'd like to see a Wi-Fi Pikmin title. Pikmin 2's multiplayer mode was outstanding, and I think it would translate perfectly to the DS.

ANDY MYERS

The unique multiplayer capabilities of Final Fantasy: Crystal Chronicles for GCN would make so much sense on the DS and in Wi-Fi.

GEORGE SINFIELD

Sports are always better when playing against another fan. I'd like to go up against someone in Green Bay or Dallas in a game of Madden NFL.

STEVE THOMASON

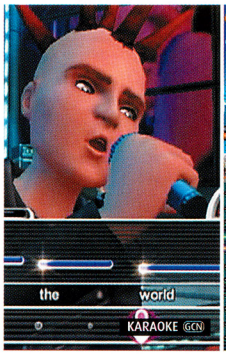
Wi-Fi dogfights in something like Star Wars or Star Fox could be a lot of fun. We had a blast with the LAN multiplayer in Revenge of the Sith.

PETE MICHAUD

To see some of Blizzard's brilliant past titles hit the Wi-Fi Connection would be amazing. Diablo, WarCraft and StarCraft could easily find a home on the DS.

SCOTT PELLAND

Smash Bros. for Wi-Fi—ultimate mayhem in the ultimate worldwide arena. The tournaments would never end.



KARAOKE REVOLUTION PARTY

RATING: 8.0

PLATFORM: NINTENDO GAMECUBE
PUBLISHER: KONAMI
DEVELOPER: HARMONIX
ESRB: EVERYONE 10+

There's nothing more awkward than reviewing Karaoke Revolution Party—a game that requires you to sing and dance—in front of your coworkers. Embarrassing moments aside, Konami's latest karaoke game (their first for the GCN) is a blast, easily reigning at the top of the KR series. The game's karaoke modes will judge your rhythm and your pitch as you sing one of 50 songs into the GCN microphone peripheral. And if you're feeling even more adventurous, you can plug in the GCN dance pad for the challenging Sing and Dance mode (basically a mixture of karaoke and Dance Dance Revolution). KRP's interface makes it as easy as possible to stay on pitch and on beat, while the awesome character customization and environments (including crowds that will boo you off the stage if you're stinking up the joint) push the already-enjoyable experience over the top. Singing duets is somewhat problematic. It requires two microphones, both of which must plug in to the Memory Card slots on the GCN, forcing you to take your memory card in and out if you want to save. But this is only a minor detraction from one of the best party games around. —ANDY M.

SONIC RUSH

RATING: 9.0

PLATFORM: NINTENDO DS
PUBLISHER: SEGA
DEVELOPER: SONICTEAM
ESRB: EVERYONE

As promised, Sonic Rush is a back-to-basics, blazingly fast platformer that hearkens back to the hedgehog's 16-bit glory days on the Sega Genesis. There are no knick-knacks to hunt down, no convoluted play mechanics to gum up the works—just one heck of a roller-coaster ride through some of the most beautiful 2-D backdrops ever put to a handheld screen (or in this case, screens). It's a game many old-schoolers have been waiting a long time for; a game that alongside Castlevania: Dawn of Sorrow and Gunstar Super Heroes (also from Sega) is ushering in a 2-D renaissance.

The levels in Sonic Rush are absolutely massive, filled with a smorgasbord of clever gimmicks that propel the blue blur (or second playable character Blaze) through the environments at dizzying speeds. In fact, this may be the fastest Sonic yet. Most of the game uses the bottom screen to extend the playfield vertically, but you'll also find bonus stages in which you use the stylus to steer Sonic through a 3-D half-pipe (reminiscent of Sonic the Hedgehog 2). These stages are nothing mind-blowing, but they make for a fun diversion, and the touch-screen control feels very solid. More impressive are the 3-D boss battles. Though you'll control the hero in the same manner as in the side-scrolling stages, each of Dr. Eggman's mechanical monstrosities takes advantage of the extra dimension to offer up an inspired face-off. Wait until you see the good doctor's final creation.

Hopefully there's a lot more where this came from. SonicTeam has done a magnificent job of distilling Sonic to its purest essence without making it feel like we're retreading old territory. —STEVE T.

SEGA CASINO

RATING: 6.0

PLATFORM: NINTENDO DS
PUBLISHER: SEGA
DEVELOPER: TOSE
ESRB: TEEN

Amid the flood of gambling titles rushing to store shelves, Sega Casino stands out by offering many ways to play—from seven-card stud to keno to baccarat, there's no shortage of ways to get your gambling fix. Table games such as blackjack and craps function well because their rules are pretty cut and dry, but, like the many other gambling titles available at the moment, the poker offerings don't provide any challenge whatsoever. Sega is known for taking its games a step beyond expectation, but Sega Casino misses in that regard. The graphics are clear and legible, but lackluster. The title doesn't make grand use of the touch screen either, an addition that would seem like a no-brainer. You'll enjoy Sega Casino for the range of games it has to offer—just don't expect to be wowed by the presentation. —CHRIS S.

TRIGGER-HAPPY?

ROUGH RIDE

GUN

GEORGE'S RATING: 8.0
CHRIS'S RATING: 8.5

PLATFORM: NINTENDO GAMECUBE
PUBLISHER: ACTIVISION
DEVELOPER: NEVERSOFT
ESRB: MATURE

Cue the theme to *High Noon*: NP reviewers George Sinfield and Chris Shepperd see eye-to-eye on most elements of Wild West-themed Gun, but that's not going stop them from facing off on some of the finer points. Are you ready for a shootout?

GS: Activision and Neversoft set out to win the West with the most ambitious GCN adventure of the year. Set in 1880 in and around Dodge City and Empire City, the well-crafted story centers on the search and battle for a treasure of personal significance to cowboy-hero Colton White. In addition to story missions, a wide-open plain of activities has you mining for gold, corralling steers, playing Texas Hold 'Em (with an ace up your sleeve) and hunting down wanted men for bounty. Though the game's wide reach adds to its entertainment value, the overall playing experience sometimes seems hastily put together. Your completion of story missions unlocks side missions, but you often can't get to them right away because you're locked into the story track–a point that you become painfully aware of when you're stuck in a brutal boss battle with no chance to opt out for a character-attribute-building session. At that moment, you begin to wonder, Is this a sandbox game, a straight-ahead story game or some odd mix of the two styles?

CS: Well, it definitely fits all of the characteristics of a sandbox game—open environment, plenty of side missions, etc.—but it just feels like there's not enough sand in the box. I think that's a big reason you're always heading toward the next main story point—there isn't anything around the dusty, lonesome West to distract you.

In truth, I'm not very torn up about this problem. The main reason is that the story itself is excellent—it's been told in the movies plenty of times, but to see such great storytelling in a video game is a rare treat. It doesn't hurt that the big-time voice acting came through in spades—Tom Skerritt's character, Clay Allison, is particularly good. I agree that there are issues with the plot presentation—the side missions are sparse and short, and the RPG-like gains from finishing them aren't enticing enough to seek them out. But given the industry's trend toward sloppy storywriting, I'll happily take what Gun is dishing out.

GS: The acting and main plot are high points to a very good game—I'm partial to Ron Perlman's performance as Hoodoo Brown. The horse-riding mechanics and animation are also excellent—the best we've seen yet. Gunplay is adequate, but problematic if you want to switch weapons in the middle of a fight. The Control Pad-and-C-stick weapon-selection procedure is unreasonably complex and, unfortunately, not available when the action is paused. I've even given up on trying to figure out how to holster my weapon. Also, there's a little too much reliance on the "Bullet-Time"-style Quickdraw mode, not because it runs everything in slow-motion, but because it's the only shooting method that gives you auto-aiming. I'd settle for fewer enemies and weaker bosses to have more consistency in the way the weapons operate.

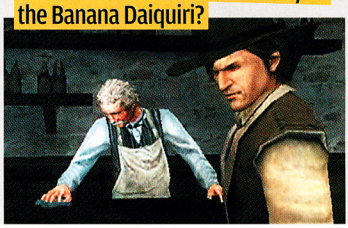
CS: Yeah, I agree that in general the game could use more polish. The controller scheme is definitely a little wacky; as for holstering your gun, I expected the NPCs to react differently depending on how you carried your firearms, but I guess it was common in the Old West to walk up to bartenders or shopkeepers with both pistols aimed at their chests.

I also would have liked to see more going on in the world, regardless of the mission you are on. It seems that trains went by and hostile Indians attacked only when the mission called for it. A more lively, dynamic world would have improved the overall atmosphere quite a bit. The graphics, though, are more than serviceable—occasionally the textures look a little undercooked, but the picturesque landscapes overlooking a mountain lake or a distant town can be truly breathtaking.

GS: The rides across the plains are beautiful, especially during the ranch-hand side missions. The character design is excellent, too, but some incidental enemies are repeated far too often. There's one side mission in Empire City in which you fight what seems like dozens of identical rogues for a batch of stolen vaccine. The developers couldn't add some variety? Give a couple of the baddies a hat or something? Overall, Gun is a great playing experience, but at times it just seems spread thin, as if the designers had so many Wild West ideas they just couldn't fully implement all of them, and the holiday release was too attractive to let the game slip for a couple of extra months of development time.

CS: I think we agree that in the end, we just wanted more. More missions, more variety, more drama. Once I had completed all of the objectives, I didn't feel compelled to just explore. A great sandbox game will do that—it will immerse you in the world long after the credits roll. Gun is a fun game while it lasts, but if given time, it could have been one of the great games of this console generation.

Let's see, should I order the whiskey or the Banana Daiquiri?



THREE'S A CHARM

MULTI-PLAYER MAGIC

HARRY POTTER AND THE GOBLET OF FIRE

RATING: 8.5

PLATFORM: NINTENDO GAMECUBE
PUBLISHER: ELECTRONIC ARTS
DEVELOPER: EA UK
ESRB: EVERYONE 10+

Since the release of the *Harry Potter and the Chamber of Secrets* film, EA has accompanied each of the wizard's trips to the multiplex with a single-player console adventure that shares story points and a title with the movie, but little else. Though the Goblet of Fire game still lacks film footage and vocal work by the movie's actors (sound-alikes do an adequate job), the characters take on the likenesses of the actors for the first time and the game's overall graphic style is more cinematic than ever. Dark and detailed landscapes are lit by a volley of dazzling magic spells that fly, flex and interact with the environment. Gameplay also takes a dramatic turn with a switch to three-player drop-in-drop-out action. Though the multiplayer focus simplifies gameplay (camera control is minimal and environmental puzzles are basic), the pros of co-op camaraderie outweigh the cons. The bulk of the game takes place in a handful of huge areas where Harry, Ron and Hermione deal with new story events (the escape of the Hungarian Horntail dragon in the Forbidden Forest and the loss of the Golden Egg below the prefects' bathroom) while they search for level-unlocking Triwizard Shields. Each area contains several shields, making it necessary to revisit places that you've already explored—but new paths keep them fresh. Enemy-attacking jinxes are assigned to the A Button while enemy-and-object-manipulating charms are assigned to the B Button. Charm selection is automatic, which simplifies the spell-casting process but, at times, the choice seems arbitrary. Why, for example, can you use Wingardium Leviosa to toss Dugbogs but not Erklings?

Wizard Cards provide a reason for players to compete for Bertie Botts's beans, the currency used to purchase the cards once they're unlocked. The use of combined spell-casting (players team up to lift a heavy object or dispatch an enemy) is another good multiplayer device. If you're playing solo, though, it can be difficult to get AI-controlled characters to cooperate, and next to impossible to complete some of Mad-Eye Moody's timed challenges. Three one-player Triwizard Tournament events and a solo battle against Voldemort add variety, and they are short enough to keep non-participating players from being bored. The package adds up to a great leap forward for the Potter franchise, and a fun and inclusive gaming experience. —GEORGE S.

THE INCREDIBLES: RISE OF THE UNDERMINER

RATING: 5.5

PLATFORM: NINTENDO DS
PUBLISHER: THQ
DEVELOPER: HELIXE
ESRB: EVERYONE 10+

Great tag-team action gets buried under a mountain of repetitive gameplay in the DS version of the Incredibles sequel. Mr. Incredible specializes in powerful punches and ground pounds; Frozone brings long-range attacks and foe-freezing to the table. You'll need them both to navigate the side-scroller, using strength to smash barriers and freeze powers to make midair steps and to ice-glide across gaps. You'll swap out the characters constantly during battle, freezing foes and then tagging in Mr. Incredible to smash 'em. Unlike many stabs at tag-team play, this game puts it to excellent use. Level designs keep things interesting by throwing in everything but the kitchen sink to keep you swapping partners, but serious deja-vu design plagues the enemy department. Alternative touch-screen controls are cleverly done on the lower screen, though it's easier to simply go old-school. —STEVEN G.

HARRY POTTER AND THE GOBLET OF FIRE

RATING: DS 8.0 /GBA 8.0

PLATFORM: NINTENDO DS/ GAME BOY ADVANCE
PUBLISHER: ELECTRONIC ARTS
DEVELOPER: EA UK
ESRB: EVERYONE

By marrying the Harry Potter game franchise to the film franchise with Goblet of Fire, EA seems to be taking one of Hollywood's favorite words to heart: action. Whereas past GBA versions of Potter titles have been RPG adventures, the DS and GBA iterations of Goblet of Fire are nearly identical isometric-view dungeon crawlers that have you firing jinxes at Dugbogs and Salamanders left and right. The games cover the same ground as the GCN version, offering an updated telling of the Goblet of Fire story that has Harry, Ron and Hermione sticking together through battles in the Forbidden Forest, the bowels of Hogwarts under the prefects' bathroom and other places that Harry explores by himself in the book. You choose one member of the trio to control, and the others follow and come to your aid when you call them. The levels are long and just a tad tedious, but simple environmental-manipulation puzzles keep them interesting enough. As in the GCN version, spell-casting is basic—limited to a single button for jinxes and another for charms. There are fewer charms in the handheld versions, but the lack of variety actually makes the fact that they are automatically selected less frustrating. The DS version adds touch-controlled spell-casting for some incidental enemy encounters (using an attack-then-defend turn-based interface) and a collection of minigames that are available from the main menu once you unlock them in the adventure. It also features two-player wizard dueling and a Care of Magical Creatures virtual-pet simulator that is humorous but shallow. The GBA version counters with two-player participation in Triwizard events and in the Yule Ball rhythm game. The lack of RPG depth is a disappointment, but the titles are solid additions to the Harry Potter gaming world. —GEORGE S.

WITHOUT A NET

QUITE A RACKET

MARIO TENNIS: POWER TOUR

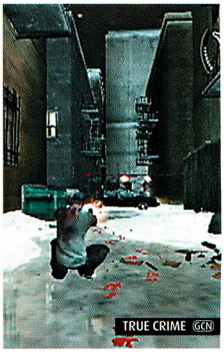
RATING: 7.0

PLATFORM: GAME BOY ADVANCE
PUBLISHER: NINTENDO
DEVELOPER: CAMELOT
ESRB: EVERYONE

Camelot has been developing Mario sports games for a while now, and unfortunately, in Mario Tennis Power Tour it feels like the spark of imagination has faded a bit. While Mario Tennis is by all means a decent game, it lacks the flair that would make you want to play it over and over again.

Like the first Mario Tennis for Game Boy Color, Power Tour is mostly built around the aptly named Power Tour mode, an RPG-style story mode in which you attend a prestigious tennis school and must rise through the ranks to become the school's elite player. The system works well to introduce you to the fundamentals of tennis, but the early opponents are far too easy. And sadly, by the time the competition is up to snuff, the game reverts to the same trickery that was first introduced in Mario Power Tennis for Nintendo GameCube: Power Shots. Instead of making the game challenging in a creative or skillful way, Mario Tennis bails out in favor of wacky megashots that dominate every scoring opportunity. It's nearly impossible to score against good opponents without using Power Shots, and it's nearly impossible for your opponent to score against you, too. Maybe such gimmicks are to be expected from a Mario sports game, but why spend all that time teaching the fundamentals if they're going to be washed away by Power Shots? It doesn't make sense. Also, grass and clay courts are strangely absent from the story mode until very late, although they are available right away in exhibition and multiplayer matches.

The minigames you unlock from tour mode are one of the bright new additions to Power Tour. In the story mode, you must compete in these minigames to gain new Power Shots. They require a mixed bag of gaming skills, from quick reflexes and perfect timing to high-speed button-mashing. They're a lot of fun and a nice diversion from match after match of straightforward tennis. —CHRIS S.



SBK: SNOWBOARD KIDS

RATING: 7.5

PLATFORM: NINTENDO DS
PUBLISHER: ATLUS
DEVELOPER: ATLUS
ESRB: EVERYONE

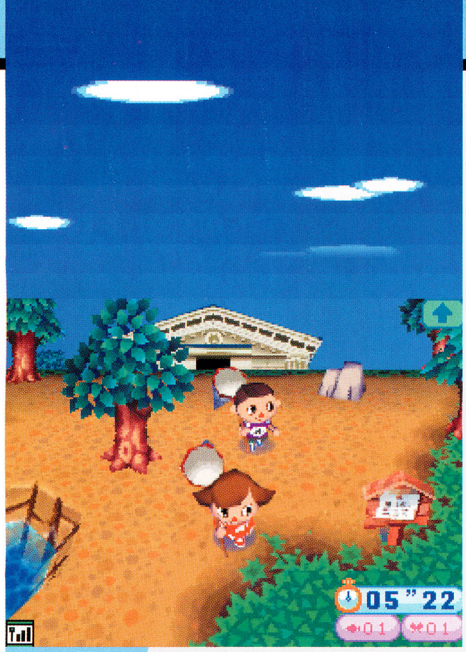
Think Mario Kart on ice; that's the best way to describe Atlus's SBK: Snowboard Kids for DS. Snowboarding with disabling items was pioneered by Atlus in the original Snowboard Kids for N64, and the DS game—the third in the series—is arguably the most refined of the three. In addition to racing against malicious characters, you'll try to beat the clock in Slalom mode and outwit wily boss boarders in Boss mode. Great multiplayer options, including the single-card, four-player LAN mode, make it a snap to race with friends. SBK integrates all of the DS's special attributes: tap sequences on the touch screen to pull off special tricks, shout into the mic to wake up your sleep-stricken racer, and track the progress of other players on the bottom-screen map. The action is fast and furious, and play control is as solid as a block of ice, which is handy since you'll have to avoid enough of those on the game's many inventive courses. But the action loses some of its edge when you try to dodge shots; you'll end up crouching through much of the race in preparation for the evasive maneuver, and control speed lags while crouching. Even so, by using items deftly, discovering shortcuts and buying better shots and boards in the shop, you'll overcome the game's few lapses and come home a winner. —SCOTT P.

TRUE CRIME: NEW YORK CITY

RATING: 8.0

PLATFORM: NINTENDO GAMECUBE
PUBLISHER: ACTIVISION
DEVELOPER: LUXOFLUX
ESRB: MATURE

The mean streets of New York are home to criminal-turned-cop Marcus Reed in Activision's follow-up to True Crime: Streets of L.A.. Reed's questionable background and underworld connections give you the option either to take the bad-cop route (extortion, black-market sales of stolen goods) or to follow the straight and narrow. If you play by the rules, you'll climb the professional ladder and learn additional police-officer skills, but you'll likely have less money to purchase weapons and cars. Crimes pop up as you make your way through the game's faithful reproduction of Manhattan. You can chase perps to earn paycheck-generating Career Points, or go for the big fish—four crime syndicates that rear their ugly heads in a six-chapter story. The openness is mind-boggling. You could spend hours cruising the streets in search of criminals, gun shops and street races. But if you want to move quickly through the story points, you can take cabs or the subway to mission locations; a great feature that saves hours of cross-town driving. Where the title falters is in a lack of polish. The graphics are so dense with detail, they often seem muddy, and it is much too difficult to capture criminals due to wonky collision detection. Also, simple actions require you to press a combination of buttons, making it difficult to remember all of the controls. If you can put up with some roughness around the edges, though, you're in for a satisfyingly lengthy and tough ride. —GEORGE S.



IT'S OFF THE LEASH!

WARM FUZZIES

ANIMAL CROSSING: WILD WORLD

RATING: 9.5

PLATFORM: NINTENDO DS
PUBLISHER: NINTENDO
DEVELOPER: NINTENDO
ESRB: EVERYONE

Animal Crossing isn't for everyone: It might not be for those whose souls are dead as radioactive bunkers, or who've pulled the plug on their creativity or cut out their heart and dropped it in the wood-chipper. But it is for the rest of us.

I wouldn't have said that about AC's GCN debut, which introduced people to the charms of living amid pants-wearin' animals in a town that changed in real time, 24/7. It was a fantabulous title that opened many eyes—including mine—to what video games could be. But some major elements (using the keyboard and the paint program, plus visiting towns) were gunked with molasses; slowed by the limitations of the GCN controller and memory card, that is.

The DS version, with touch control and wireless communication, not only eliminates those problems, but it weaves them into an intuitive and immersive experience that's truly the "communication game" the first AC meant to be.

Playing the DS version over the Nintendo Wi-Fi Connection or wireless LAN is the easiest way to see that AC is stepping up. You couldn't meet players in the previous game: you could only visit their villages. Now that I've played Animal Crossing: Wild World over the Nintendo Wi-Fi Connection (having others over to my town or heading over to someone else's, chatting with several players at once, trading items, getting tours of their homes), the first AC feels like a ghost town. Mind you, I played the GCN game for 360 continuous days, but I could never go back now that I've experienced Wild World. There is one communication breakdown, however: despite going Wi-Fi, the game won't let you send mail to players in other towns from your own post office; you still have to travel to those towns first then send 'em from their postal centers. Too bad.

But even if you never travel to another town or let anyone into yours, Wild World still lives up to its "communication game" status with great improvements. Animals blab a lot—there's seemingly enough writing behind critters' dialog balloons to fill an average *Harry Potter* novel. It was pretty amusing last time; in the DS version, the writing hits a high and stays there. It's funny, weird, sad, ecstatic, melancholy or superpeppy, depending on which animal you're talking to. But it's almost always a kick, and if you tuned out the animals last time, you'll dial 'em back in now. They'll also ask favors of players to draw you into their lives more deeply: it's out with monotonous delivery quests, and in with specific interests, such as wanting to snack on a rainbow trout (which may send you fishing for hours) or obsessing about fashion (which may compel you to seek rare outfits). The residents also behave in more-complex ways (gossiping among themselves as you "listen" nearby, for instance) that will make you . . . it's embarrassing to admit . . . love the little dudes.

But putting communication aside, Wild World brings back much from the GCN version that is familiar, then spices it up with new stuff. Some players would sit up awake all night fishing on the GCN; they'll find new fish swimming in the rivers and offshore now. Same for bugs and fossils; many returning faves, plus new catches. Among the furniture sets and hundreds of stand-alone items are many now-classics and lots of new surprises. Likewise with neighbors, visiting NPCs, holidays, special events and so on. Some fans might want 100% new everything; but to me, the old/new blend feels right.

I am hooked by the addition of two new categories of items: hats and accessories. Given how much I plan to be hitting the road via Wi-Fi and meeting other players, the ability to change my appearance (and my hairstyle at the new salon) is welcome. Since the paint program is a breeze with the stylus, whipping up costumes is great for those of us who wish Halloween were every day.

But while the game brings much to the table that it didn't before, ultimately it's the way it now brings *your* game (your attitude, creativity, communication and ambition) into the spotlight (locally and nationally) that makes Animal Crossing: Wild World truly exceptional. —STEVEN G.

A SECOND OPINION

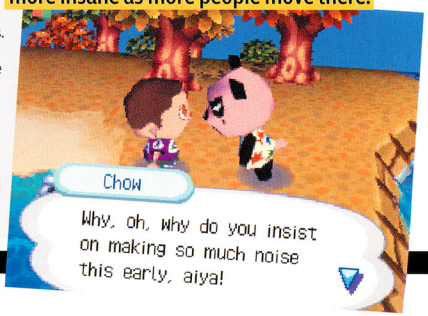
RATING: 8.5

I liked the concept behind the original Animal Crossing, but playing it always felt like a chore. The payoff for having an awesome town was showing it to friends, yet you had to go through some bizarre GCN memory card-swapping ritual, and then you couldn't even be in the town at the same time! What was up with that?

Wild World goes a long way to eradicate this problem, but it doesn't quite go far enough for me. Steven mentioned not being able to send mail over the Wi-Fi network—I think the flaw is more fundamental than that. Wild World offers no easy solution for randomly hooking up with strangers. Unlike Mario Kart DS or Tony Hawk's American Sk8land, you will most likely have to do some offline planning to visit each other's towns, even if your friend roster is maxed out.

Don't get me wrong; Wild World is brilliant (hence the glowing score). The gameplay, the dialog, the new features—all greatly exceed the original game. I was just hoping for a little more on the Wi-Fi end. —ANDY M.

Wild World is crazy fun, and it'll only get more insane as more people move there.



PAC-MAN WORLD 3

RATING: 7.0

PLATFORM: NINTENDO GAMECUBE
PUBLISHER: NAMCO
DEVELOPER: BLITZ GAMES
ESRB: EVERYONE

The Pac-Man action-adventure concept is a little tired—he hops around for pellets and fruit, runs into a few enemies; lather, rinse, repeat. Though Pac-Man World 3 sticks to the tried-and-true formula, it does so with a lot of great touches and extras. The game's 15 levels are complex multipath affairs that recall those of the Namco-published I-Ninja. Also, Pac-Man learns an assortment of clever moves that make use of his round body and penchant for pellets. The Rev Roll, for example, allows Pac-Man to plow through enemies and pick up speed for long jumps, and a special pellet creates a rainbow stream behind Pac-Man that he can use to corral enemies. Among the extras are 18 unlockable mazes that play like the Pac-Man classics, as well as a museum dedicated to the hero's 25-year history. Old-school fans will enjoy the nod to the past. Platform aficionados will appreciate the smooth control and nonstop action. —GEORGE S.

MARIO PARTY 7

RATING: 7.5

PLATFORM: NINTENDO GAMECUBE
PUBLISHER: NINTENDO
DEVELOPER: HUDSON SOFT
ESRB: EVERYONE

No video game character knows how to party like Mario, and even though this series is now on its seventh console iteration, there's no sign that the festivities are slowing down. Quite the opposite—Mario Party 7 adds some nice new features to the tried-and-true formula. The basics are the same: choose from a variety of themed boards, march to whatever space Lady Luck dictates, collect coins, obtain stars and engage in a multitude of minigames. Whether playing solo in a barrel-hurdling race against Donkey Kong, teaming up with a partner to toss vegetables onto a truck or using the included microphone to send vicious sea life after the other players, you'll usually be engaged in simple but riotous fun, and there's no lack of variety. MP7 also mixes things up by changing the way you get stars. On some boards you'll simply buy them, but on the Windmillville board, for example, you'll get stars by competitively investing funds in windmills; in Pyramid Park you'll start with five stars, and the only way to get more is by using Chain Chomps to steal them from other players. Furthermore, Mario Party 7 adds a new eight-player mode in which teams of two share a controller. The eight-player minigames are basic and a little awkward, but they're a great inclusion for big social-gaming gatherings. Too bad MP7 doesn't do much to improve Solo mode—it's still a total drag, and playing it is, unfortunately, the only way to unlock the game's sixth board. Some players may be irked that the outcome of each game is determined more by luck than by skill, but Mario Party isn't about who wins and who loses as much as it is about the multiplayer experience—and that's something MP7 excels at. —CHRIS H.

BABY GAME FOR BABIES

IT'S BRO TIME

MARIO & LUIGI: PARTNERS IN TIME

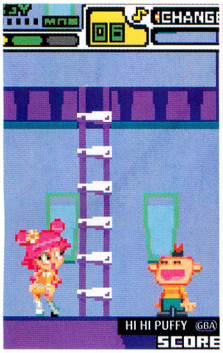
RATING: 9.0

PLATFORM: NINTENDO DS
PUBLISHER: NINTENDO
DEVELOPER: ALPHADREAM
ESRB: EVERYONE

Most RPGs take themselves very seriously. They explore themes like love, conflict and humanity with epic tales steeped in gravitas. Mario & Luigi: Partners in Time explores the narrative value of hitting someone over the head with a hammer. And really, isn't that more important?

Like Mario & Luigi: Superstar Saga, Partners in Time is not just amusing; it's genuinely funny—the rare game that can actually make you laugh out loud. The writing is once again spot-on, and the animation quality has improved over the previous game to allow for more physical comedy (which usually involves abusing Luigi, of course). Setting the stage for these wacky hijinks is a plot that has Mario and Luigi traveling back in time and teaming up with baby versions of themselves to stop an alien invasion. The unique partnership makes great use of the dual screens and lends itself to some creative level design. You'll frequently have to separate the toddlers from the grown-ups, controlling the duos independently (on their own screens) so they can work in tandem to solve puzzles or take different routes to the next area. As a result, traversing the game's varied locales is usually more interesting and involving than in your typical RPG. The same holds true for the battle system, in which you take an active role in executing attacks and dodging enemy strikes. The boss encounters in particular will put your reflexes to the test.

Partners in Time does stumble in a couple of areas: the time-travel theme is sorely underutilized, the game is fairly easy, and for everything the developers added (Bros. Items), it seems like they took something out (Bros. Attacks). Minor nitpicking aside, it's a worthy follow-up to Superstar Saga, and the first great RPG on the DS. —STEVE T.



HI HI PUFFY AMIYUMI: KAZNAPPED!

RATING: 6.5

PLATFORM: GAME BOY ADVANCE
PUBLISHER: D3
DEVELOPER: D3
ESRB: EVERYONE

The GBA debut of Cartoon Network's J-pop duo Puffy AmiYumi is exactly what you'd expect: a 2-D platformer in which extracute versions of singer Ami and guitarist Yumi take turns collecting musical notes, stupefying fan boys and beating up kooky robots. That it does what it does with such colorful flair and tight pacing is the pleasant surprise that makes this entertaining piece of fluff rise above the licensed-character hop-and-battle scrap heap. A shooter minigame between three-level sections of the World Tour adds variety, as do a swimming level and a series of block-and-switch puzzles. Ami's microphone-swinging move isn't quite as simple to pull off as it should be, and Yumi's Flying V guitar attack could use a little less wind-up and a little more zing, but 18 levels, loads of unlockables and undeniable polish make the game a success. —GEORGE S.

SUPER MARIO STRIKERS

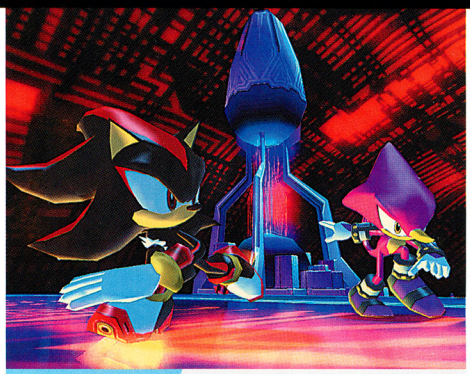
RATING: 7.5

PLATFORM: NINTENDO GAMECUBE
PUBLISHER: NINTENDO
DEVELOPER: NEXT LEVEL GAMES
ESRB: EVERYONE

The big man is back, this time donning a kit and cleats in Super Mario Strikers, and the action on the pitch is fast and furious. The multitude of items and antics keeps the game moving at a ludicrous pace. Additionally, an enormous Bowser appears once in a while to shake things up. Possession of the ball changes so often it makes your head spin. In multiplayer games, it's even better—you can't help but taunt when you knock your opponent off the ball with a Koopa shell just before he gets off a surefire shot on goal.

The big issue with on-field play is the almost-random chance that goals will go in or get blocked by the goalkeeper. One-time passes and other carefully established plays have about as much likelihood of finding the back of the net as blasts from the midfield line. Mario sports games are great for their frenetic action, but they should at least reward solid fundamental gameplay skill, as well. That said, you don't get the sensation that one keeper is playing exceptionally better than the other at any time, so you never feel like you're getting shafted.

Super Mario Strikers is a great first step in a long series of quality soccer games. It doesn't have all the bells and whistles of a well-established franchise, but the core gameplay is nearly spot-on. Unfortunately, the only modes are single-player exhibition, multiplayer exhibition and a handful of cup challenges. It would have been nice to see a little more variation in the gameplay. Nonetheless, for sports-game fans looking for yet another fix of frenzied multiplayer fun, Strikers will fit the bill quite nicely. —CHRIS S.



HEDGEHOG'S GOT A GUN

BLACK IS THE NEW BLUE

SHADOW THE HEDGEHOG

RATING: 8.0

PLATFORM: NINTENDO GAMECUBE
PUBLISHER: SEGA
DEVELOPER: SONICTEAM
ESRB: EVERYONE 10+

When Sega first announced that their next console title starring a hedgehog would feature Shadow packing heat, many dismissed it as a cynical attempt by the publisher to cash in on a more "mature" audience. The finished product, however, should quiet many of the critics. This darker take on the Sonic universe succeeds for the most part, giving the series a bit of an edge without going overboard on violence. In fact, most of the gunplay is fairly tame. Its main purpose is seemingly to slow things down between hyperfast set pieces, providing a nice balance in terms of pacing. Plus, blasting Shadow's foes with the wide variety of weapons at his disposal is just plain fun.

Who those foes are is up to you. The game plays off its titular hedgehog's mysterious nature by allowing you to pursue heroic, evil or neutral objectives in each level. Depending on which you choose, the story branches into a number of divergent paths, each leading to different stages, bosses and endings. You can play through the game once in about four or five hours, but you'll see only a small fraction of what it has to offer. And many of the sights are well worth seeing. Shadow is running on an all-new graphics engine that results in some awe-inspiring scenes and an impressively smooth frame rate.

Though it's a significant departure for the series, some of the problems from the past few games do carry over. It's still far too easy to fall to your death, too many quests require you to find "X" objects without providing any sort of radar or direction, and while most of the game looks attractive, it dips into Dreamcast territory from time to time (especially for some of the character models). Like the 3-D Sonics, however, Shadow survives these shortcomings to deliver an enjoyable, high-octane adventure. Naysayers be damned. —STEVE T.

AMERICAN IDIOT

DON'T BE A SK8R H8R

TONY HAWK'S AMERICAN SK8LAND

RATING: 8.0

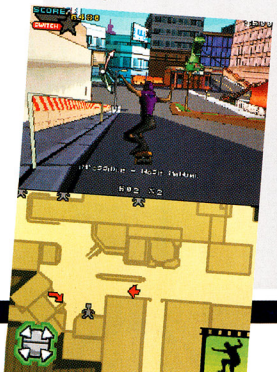
PLATFORM: NINTENDO DS
PUBLISHER: ACTIVISION
DEVELOPER: VICARIOUS VISIONS
ESRB: EVERYONE

Vicarious Visions (the developer responsible for all of the GBA Hawk games) has excelled at translating Neversoft's beloved console franchise into the 2-D realm, and the team has delivered a 3-D Hawk game for the DS that is one of the best in the series.

Tony Hawk's American Sk8land stands out from other Hawk titles because of its cel-shaded graphics. Don't expect to be wowed by the game's visuals, but make no mistake—Sk8land is a Hawk game to its core. The controls are spot-on, the level design rocks (a claim that I wouldn't make for either THUG game) and most of the moves from the other games in the franchise are included. There are some exceptions—you can't get off your board and run around on foot, for instance—but they matter little in the context of this game.

Despite THAS's similarity to its console predecessors, the game stands on its own with a plethora of DS-specific functionality. Character customization is especially cool, allowing you to design your own boards and graffiti tags using a robust paint editor. You can even create voice-overs using the DS microphone (it'll freak your friends out to hear your voice in the game). But THAS's greatest use of the DS is its Wi-Fi functionality. The list of Wi-Fi features is long, and though a few come across as afterthoughts, some are a blast. Head-to-head competitions are especially fun, despite the absence of Horse mode (which we saw in an early version of the game).

If THAS lacks in any area, it's in the game's overall structure. The nonintuitive menu system and behind-the-scenes stat leveling make it difficult to track your progress. Each of the game's seven levels is available in both Story and Classic modes, but only Classic mode is linked to Wi-Fi play, which may be annoying to fans who favor Story mode. Aside from a few minor issues, though, Vicarious Visions has done a fantastic job creating a faithful and fun Hawk game. —ANDY M.



THE SIMS 2

RATING: 7.5

PLATFORM: GAME BOY ADVANCE
PUBLISHER: ELECTRONIC ARTS
DEVELOPER: MAXIS/AMAZE ENTERTAINMENT
ESRB: EVERYONE 10+

The GBA iterations of Sims titles play by different rules than the console and PC games. In fact, it would be difficult to categorize The Sims 2 for the GBA as a sim at all. Your character has needs (food, rest, bladder relief), as in the GCN and DS Sims 2 titles, his social standing builds as he communicates with other Sims, and he can purchase items for his home, but his main activities revolve around a linear 11-episode story with specific mission goals. The feed-him-when-he's-hungry aspect at the center of other Sims titles is more of a minor annoyance in this game than a source for inspired play. But inspiration is evident in the game's humorous characters, reality-television-parodying storyline and production value (great graphics and an entertaining show-opening sequence). The playing experience is enjoyable, just different from what you might expect if your concept of Sims games is PC-based. —GEORGE S.

THE SIMS 2

RATING: 8.5

PLATFORM: NINTENDO GAMECUBE
PUBLISHER: ELECTRONIC ARTS
DEVELOPER: MAXIS
ESRB: TEEN

Whether The Sims 2 will turn your crank depends on whether you like MTV's *The Real World*. Though you can select one of five aspirations that determine your main goals, the Romance and Popularity options are what transform this Sims into a party animal. You can choose to play your primary character like a eunuch and focus on Wealth, Knowledge or Creativity, but you'll bump into and take control of other characters in story mode, many of whom must pursue Romance or Popularity. All playable characters get a rotation of secondary goals that aren't scandalous—getting jobs and earning promotions; mastering skills like logic and mechanics; making paintings and altering architecture—but it's bed-hopping and late-night bashes that steal the spotlight. All is done with Sims humor (by far the funniest and best-animated yet on consoles), so you won't see anything racier than acrobatics under bed sheets. But what really turns Sims 2 into a must-play is the departure from managing Sims like ants (still an option) and instead living their lives through direct control. It puts you at the heart of the action and taps into the new Social mode, which relies on a great system of body language and an ever-adapting menu of communication options that range from catfighting to proposing marriage. If someone backs off, a kiss is risky; if your love interest presses close, it's a bad time for hacky sack. Social mode is amazing for a few days, but then its mysteries become obvious. Fortunately, Sims 2 offers many long-term distractions, such as the epic story mode (which starts with spring-breaky locales then goes very strange places), the freeplay mode that lets you create your own domestic paradise (or hell, if you choose), plus a new cooking system (complex but too much busy work) and fashion engine (worthy of serious obsession). —STEVEN G.

HARVEST MOON
Another Wonderful Life

HARVEST MOON
More Friends of Mineral Town

A Lifelong Adventure!

Dreams Do Come True!!

EVERYONE
E
Alcohol Reference
Suggestive Themes
ESRB CONTENT RATING www.esrb.org

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EVERYONE
E
Use of Alcohol
ESRB CONTENT RATING www.esrb.org

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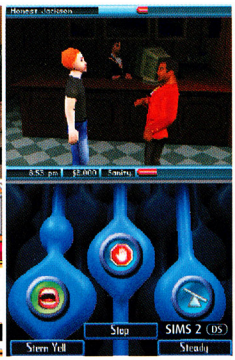

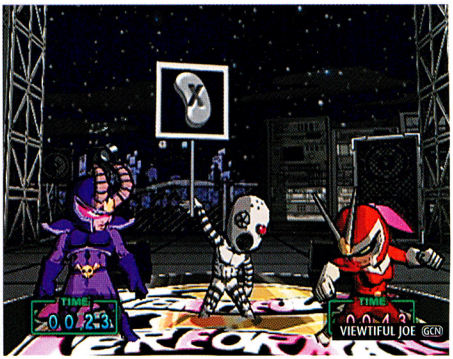

TEENAGE MUTANT NINJA TURTLES 3: MUTANT NIGHTMARE

RATING: 4.0

PLATFORM: NINTENDO GAMECUBE
PUBLISHER: KONAMI
DEVELOPER: KONAMI
ESRB: EVERYONE 10+

The folks at Konami have added numerous appreciated features to their latest TMNT game in an effort to bring the series out of the sewer, including upgradeable combos and skills, stat-boosting scrolls to find and equip plus more-varied gameplay. The new shooting stages are basic but fun, and the driving stages are vastly improved over those in TMNT2. Unfortunately, the developers didn't fix the main problem: the series's clunky combat engine. The fighting is still stiff, targeting is still problematic and the turtles still take way too long to recover when they get knocked down. CPU-controlled teammates (a cool inclusion in theory) that inadvertently hamper your movement don't help matters either. Even the classic TMNT: Turtles in Time bonus arcade game doesn't run as smoothly as it should. —CHRIS H.

DR. MARIO & PUZZLE LEAGUE

RATING: 7.0

PLATFORM: GAME BOY ADVANCE
PUBLISHER: NINTENDO
DEVELOPER: INTELLIGENT SYSTEMS
ESRB: EVERYONE

Dr. Mario & Puzzle League offers two solid, classic puzzle games in one Game Boy Advance pak—nothing more, nothing less. If you've experienced the mind-bending gameplay of these titles in their previous incarnations, then you know what to expect here: addictive, combo-oriented, color-matching action that can keep puzzle-game fans hooked for hours. Both titles feature a decent but familiar selection of modes—including solo play and versus-CPU bouts—but it's a letdown that you need two copies of the game to play against a human opponent. It's also too bad the developers didn't do more with the presentation; Dr. Mario has some new animations, but Puzzle League has no personality whatsoever. Fortunately, what these games lack in style and innovation they make up for in challenge and fun. —CHRIS H.

THE SIMS 2

RATING: 5.5

PLATFORM: NINTENDO DS
PUBLISHER: ELECTRONIC ARTS
DEVELOPER: MAXIS/AMAZE ENTERTAINMENT
ESRB: EVERYONE 10+

Roadside attraction or travel destination? In theory, the DS version of The Sims 2 could have had the best of both worlds. Set in a desert town that's overrun with aliens and, worse yet, hotel guests that routinely suffer emotional breakdowns, The Sims 2 goes for ultraweird as proudly as all-time greats EarthBound and Maniac Mansion. And it's hard-core about being a hotel sim, letting you turn a run-down fleabag into a thriving 3-D resort with your personal touches, right down to the paintings that hang on walls and the music piped into rooms. Sadly, the game has one major problem: In mimicking the console version's groundbreaking communication system, which makes you watch a person carefully for nonverbal cues before you choose one of many nonverbal responses, the DS game dumbs it down so it's a memorization chore, with almost none of the cues making any sense. Since you interact with hotel guests constantly, the mindless monotony makes you want to run screaming for the hills. In addition, the Sims system of gaining skill points (logic, creativity, etc.) through interacting with related items like books and easels has also been simplified to collecting random tokens. Dull and uninspired for a Sims game. It's all a shame, since the strange humor is well-done, the minigames are good and a real-time system lends a very simmy touch to guests' comings and goings. In addition, the system of Sim needs (like eating, drinking and sleeping) has been made much less nagging, combined into one tidy Sanity meter. Ultimately, The Sims 2 is a great curiosity for a day, but it's not a place you'd want to stay. —STEVEN G.

VIEWTIFUL JOE: RED HOT RUMBLE

RATING: 6.5

PLATFORM: NINTENDO GAMECUBE
PUBLISHER: CAPCOM
DEVELOPER: CLOVER STUDIO
ESRB: TEEN

After proving that side-scrollers can still be innovative and engaging, Viewtiful Joe tries something a bit different for his latest console outing. A four-player brawler in the vein of Super Smash Bros., Red Hot Rumble isn't nearly as earth-shattering as the celluloid superhero's first two games, but it's faithful to the spirit of the series, offering something truly unique. Rather than simply duke it out, players compete over certain objectives: trying to defeat the most enemies, collect the most coins, put the biggest hurt on bosses, etc. It's an interesting dichotomy that forces the players to cooperate against external forces while competing against each other. The locales for these myriad showdowns are provocative and varied; one particularly cool scene puts the combatants on the wings of a biplane while another aircraft chases it through a valley with guns a-blazin'. The series's trademark 2-D-meets-3-D aesthetic is in full effect and as appealing as ever (though the Johnny Rockets ads plastered everywhere have to go). In addition, some great animated cut-scenes really bring out the game's delightfully bizarre personality.

So what prevents Red Hot Rumble from achieving true Viewtiful status? The gameplay just isn't as polished as the rest of the package. The implementation of the VFX Powers (one of the elements that helped the series make a name for itself) is tragically underdeveloped, a few of the characters are terribly unbalanced, and the game just doesn't feel as solid as previous Joes. There are enough neat ideas here that I'd like to see Clover try a sequel, but they need to work out some of the kinks. —STEVE T.

2006

This year's calendar is full of events and activities, both in Animal Crossing: Wild World and in real life. It's going to be a wild year!

Animal Crossing DS

EVERYONE E CONTENT RATED BY ESRB

NINTENDO POWER

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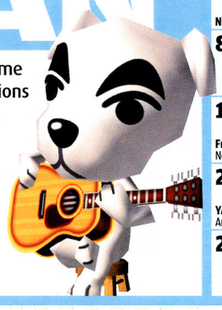
JAN



January is the time to make resolutions for the coming year. Spend more time with friends, or take the time to hear K.K.'s set on Saturday nights.

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
1 New Year's Day	2 Be Nice to Nook Day	3	4 NOA Andy Chat 2:00 PM nintendo.com	5	6	7
8	9	10	11	12	13	14 La-Di-Day All Day
15 Fishing Tourney Noon-6:00 PM	16 Martin Luther King Jr. Day	17	18	19	20	21
22 Yay Day All Day	23	24	25	26	27	28
29	30	31	1	2	3	4

FEB

Plan a special Animal Crossing Valentine's Day and Bright Nights festival with your sweetie. Invite her, or him, to your village and show off a heart-shaped star constellation in the sky.

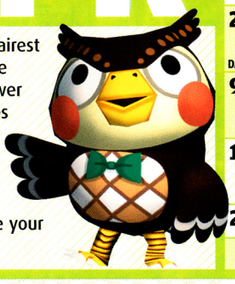
SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
29	30	31	1 NOA Andy 2:00 PM nintendo.com	2	3	4 Flea Market All Day
5	6 Bright Nights About one Week	7	8	9	10	11
12	13	14 Valentine's Day	15	16	17	18
19	20	21	22	23	24	25
26 Fishing Tourney Noon-6:00 PM	27	28 Tag Mode Day All Day	1	2	3	4

MAR

Take note of La-Di-Day—the second Saturday of odd-numbered months—because villagers will sing or hum a tune all day long. It's a great time to choose a new town tune.

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
26	27	28	1 NOA Andy Chat 2:00 PM nintendo.com	2	3	4 Flea Market All Day
5	6 Wear a Mask Monday	7	8	9	10	11 La-Di-Day All Day
12	13	14	15	16	17	18
19 Fishing Tourney Noon-6:00 PM	20 Game Developers Conference	21 Game Developers Conference	22 Game Developers Conference	23 Game Developers Conference	24 Game Developers Conference	25 Spring Cleaning
26 Yay Day All Day	27	28	29	30	31	1

APR



Who has the fairest yard of all? The weeklong Flower Fest culminates with one villager winning a contest for best garden. How green are your thumbs?

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
26	27	28	29	30	31	1 Flea Market All Day
2 Daylight Savings Time	3	4	5 NOA Andy Chat 2:00 PM nintendo.com	6	7	8
9	10 Flower Fest All Week	11	12	13	14	15
16	17	18	19	20	21	22
23 Fishing Tourney Noon-6:00 PM 30	24	25 Tag Mode Day All Day	26	27	28	29

MAY

The official Fishing Tourney is on the 21st this month, but you can invite friends (via the Nintendo Wi-Fi Connection) to a fishing contest any day. Between bites, be sure to check out E3 news on nintendo.com.

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
30	1	2	3 NOA Andy Chat 2:00 PM nintendo.com	4	5	6 Flea Market All Day
7	8	9	10 E3	11 E3	12 E3	13 La-Di-Day All Day
14 Mother's Day	15 E3 Wrap Up nintendo.com	16	17	18	19	20
21 Fishing Tourney Noon-6:00 PM	22	23	24	25	26 Visit a Friend Friday	27
28 Yay Day All Day	29 Memorial Day	30	31	1	2	3

JUN

The villagers' obsession with bugs begins with the season's first official Bug-Off on the 18th. To be the champ, you'll have to catch the biggest bug between noon and six.

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
28	29	30	31	1	2	3 Flea Market All Day
4	5 Make-a-Design Monday	6	7 NOA Andy Chat 2:00 PM nintendo.com	8	9	10
11	12	13	14	15	16	17
18 The Bug-Off Noon-6:00 PM Father's Day	19	20	21	22	23	24
25	26	27 Tag Mode Day All Day	28	29	30	1

2006

Animal Crossing DS

EVERYONE E CONTENT RATED BY ESRB

NINTENDO POWER

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JUL

Independence Day in the United States and Canada Day are great excuses to party. Tom Nook will help you stock up on festive items for your bash.

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
25	26	27	28	29	30	1 Flea Market All Day Canada Day
2	3	4 Independence Day	5 NOA Andy Chat 2:00 PM nintendo.com	6	7	8 La-Di-Day All Day
9	10	11	12	13	14	15
16 The Bug-Off Noon-6:00 PM	17	18	19	20	21	22
23 Yay Day All Day	24	25	26	27	28	29
30	31					

AUG

Enjoy a Fireworks Show in your village every Saturday night in August from seven until midnight. It's a great time for friends to visit.

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
30	31	1	2 NOA Andy Chat 2:00 PM nintendo.com	3	4	5 Fireworks Show 7:00 PM-Midnight
6	7 New-Hairdo Day	8	9	10	11	12 Fireworks Show 7:00 PM-Midnight
13	14 Camp Hyrule	15 Camp Hyrule	16 Camp Hyrule	17 Camp Hyrule	18 Camp Hyrule	19 Fireworks Show 7:00 PM-Midnight
20 The Bug-Off Noon-6:00 PM	21	22	23	24	25	26 Fireworks Show 7:00 PM-Midnight
27	28	29 Tag Mode Day All Day	30	31	1	2

SEP

School resumes, summer ends, days get shorter and colder. How depressing. Forget all that and celebrate Yay Day by complimenting your neighbors. They'll love it.

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
27	28	29	30	31	1	2 Flea Market All Day
3	4 Labor Day	5	6 NOA Andy Chat 2:00 PM nintendo.com	7	8	9 La-Di-Day All Day
10	11	12	13	14	15	16
17 The Bug-Off Noon-6:00 PM	18	19 Plant-a-Plant Day	20	21	22	23
24 Yay Day All Day	25	26	27	28	29	30

OCT

As the leaves turn color in October, the acorns ripen and are ready for harvest. If you collect enough of the tasty treats, you might earn a special reward.

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
1	2	3	4 NOA Andy Chat 2:00 PM	5	6	7 Flea Market All Day
8	9 Acorn Festival About one Week	10	11	12	13	14
15	16	17	18 Weed-a-Friend's-Garden Wednesday!	19	20	21
22 Fishing Tourney Noon-6:00 PM	23	24	25	26	27	28
29	30	31 Tag Mode Day All Day	1	2	3	4

NOV

Since there aren't any big festivals in November, why not concoct your own? You can create a decorative theme, contests or prizes, then open the gates for visitors.

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
29	30	31	1 NOA Andy Chat 2:00 PM nintendo.com	2	3	4 Flea Market All Day
5	6	7 Catch a trout Tuesday!	8	9	10	11 La-Di-Day All Day
12	13	14	15	16 Mr. Miyamoto's Birthday	17	18
19 Fishing Tourney Noon-6:00 PM	20	21	22	23	24	25
26 Yay Day All Day	27	28	29	30	1	2

DEC

With winter's cold winds, it's time to blow town and head to Hawaii. Take your DS and Animal Crossing, 'cause you can connect with Wi-Fi even in the middle of the Pacific.

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
26	27	28	29	30	1	2 Flea Market All Day
3	4	5	6 NOA Andy Chat 2:00 PM nintendo.com	7	8	9
10	11	12	13	14	15	16
17 Fishing Tourney Noon-6:00 PM	18	19	20	21	22	23
24 Countdown New Year's Eve 31	25	26 Tag Mode Day All Day	27	28	29	30

DRAGON BALL Z: SUPERSONIC WARRIORS 2

RATING: 5.0

PLATFORM: NINTENDO DS
PUBLISHER: ATARI
DEVELOPER: BIRD STUDIO/SHUEISHA
ESRB: EVERYONE 10+

I hate to break it to Dragon Ball Z fans (mainly because I'm terrified of them), but Goku and company's first foray on the Nintendo DS is pretty mediocre. The sequel to last year's Supersonic Warriors for the GBA, it suffers from an overly simplistic fighting engine, weak animation and a story mode that skims past major plot points with all the bluster of 10th-grade chemistry class. The game also does very little to take advantage of the DS hardware. The bottom screen is used only to tag in your partner during team battles and to activate Team Super attacks, both of which could have been mapped to the buttons easily. "What if?" scenarios for each of the playable characters (including tons of unlockables) may be of interest to DBZ devotees, but the half-hearted execution of everything else will ultimately leave them disappointed. —STEVE T.

THE CHRONICLES OF NARNIA: THE LION, THE WITCH AND THE WARDROBE

RATING: 5.5

PLATFORM: NINTENDO GAMECUBE
PUBLISHER: BUENA VISTA GAMES
DEVELOPER: TRAVELLER'S TALES
ESRB: TEEN

Being a fan of the book series, I really wanted to enjoy what is sure to be the first of many Narnia-based games. There are definitely some likeable things about The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe, but overall the game doesn't stand on its own. Much like EA's Lord of the Rings titles, this one is a fast-paced action game that weaves in movie footage to tell its story. The Pevensie children—Peter, Susan, Edmund and Lucy—each have their own special abilities. (Lucy, for instance, can heal the other party members, while Edmund can climb trees.) You can cycle between the children on the battlefield, and link them together to perform some interesting cooperative moves. Visually, Narnia excels, pulling its characters and environments straight out of the movie. The problem is that the characters are often thrown into scenarios that don't have any rhyme or reason, and movie footage is so embedded that it feels like you're not even playing a game half the time. —ANDY M.

NEED FOR SPEED: MOST WANTED

RATING: 8.0

PLATFORM: NINTENDO GAMECUBE
PUBLISHER: EA
DEVELOPER: EA CANADA
ESRB: TEEN

Beginning Need for Speed: Most Wanted behind the wheel of a super-fast BMW that handles like a dream, you'll think it's a far cry from the previous games in the series, which start you off in stock models more likely to be found in your grandparents' garage than dueling on the streets. But it's all a cunning trick. After several breezy victories, you'll blow a gasket and lose that sweet ride to a punk named Razor. The rest of the game is all about climbing back to respectability among your peers by winning races, tormenting cops and earning enough cash to buy cars that can compete with the bad boys on the notorious Blacklist. Combining the tuner culture of Need for Speed Underground with the excitement of cop pursuits is definitely the right direction for this series to head. You'll have ample opportunities to customize your wheels, take on dozens of different racing challenges and still experience the thrills and chills of the chase. Production quality is fine, too, from an excellent music score to rock-steady graphics. This may be one of the smoothest racers ever, and definitely a most-wanted on my list. —SCOTT P.

NEED FOR SPEED: MOST WANTED

RATING: 6.0

PLATFORM: NINTENDO DS
PUBLISHER: EA
DEVELOPER: EA CANADA
ESRB: EVERYONE

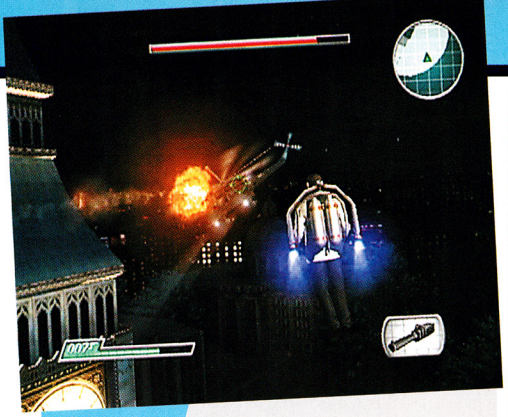
I can think of a long list of items that would have been nice in the Nintendo DS version of NFS: Most Wanted. Good use of the DS's attributes would have been welcome. (Touch-screen decal painting is okay, but somewhat limited and buggy.) A fully fleshed-out story as in the GCN version would have been a plus—and some sort of free-roaming mode, too. And more than anything I wanted the thrill of high-speed police chases, but the cops in this version must be sleeping off their doughnuts; they show a marked lack of enthusiasm for pursuit. What I didn't expect to see was frames dropping when a few extra cars showed up on the screen, and I could have used extra lighting on many of the tracks, not to mention brighter, easier-to-discern colors on the course map. What actually made it into the game is smooth play control, a good sense of speed, LAN multiplayer options and a nice mix of race types, from lap knockouts to barricade challenges wherein you dodge police barricades. The game is solid, but it could have been so much more. —SCOTT P.

THE CHRONICLES OF NARNIA: THE LION, THE WITCH AND THE WARDROBE

RATING: 7.0

PLATFORM: NINTENDO DS
PUBLISHER: BUENA VISTA GAMES
DEVELOPER: AMAZE ENTERTAINMENT
ESRB: EVERYONE 10+

Though C.S. Lewis's tale of a 100-year winter unfolds in Buena Vista's DS book-and-movie adaptation, the story often gets lost in the game's numerous side quests, character-building exercises and battles—lots and lots of battles. You control one Pevensie sibling at a time and dole out attack strategies to the others via the touch screen as the group of up to four (all available as player-controlled characters in Multiplayer mode) fights Boggles, wolves and other much-too-resilient enemies. You'll restart at the last checkpoint if your character is defeated, but your AI support characters will regenerate automatically if they go down—an inconsistent but useful cheat that ensures success in tough situations. You can get help from animals in the form of touch-screen-triggered special moves. Also of assistance is a lower-screen map (which is not available in dungeons) and a point system that allows you to increase your party members' abilities. If you don't mind monotonous dungeon-hacking, you'll find the RPG elements and use of the DS's features rewarding. —GEORGE S.



STRAIGHT TO VIDEO

DOUBLE-O 7.0

FROM RUSSIA WITH LOVE

RATING: 7.0

PLATFORM: NINTENDO GAMECUBE
PUBLISHER: ELECTRONIC ARTS
DEVELOPER: EA REDWOOD SHORES
ESRB: TEEN

At first glance, adapting a classic movie to film seems like a good move. Not only are the characters, location and plot already determined, but the question of whether the audience will like these components has already been answered. But it's not that easy—movies and video games are different enough that you have to make some huge adjustments to make a video game fun.

From Russia with Love is in a lot of ways faithful to the original movie, including many of the same scenes and people. Unfortunately, this association sometimes holds the game back in places where it could have been much better. It might be OK for a movie to show the same location over and over, but as a video game, the repetition gets old. Driving around in Istanbul is particularly dull the third time you do it. The game also feels too short—a side effect of being tied to the plot of a two-hour movie.

Quite surprisingly, the core gameplay mechanics are also not as good as one would expect. Although it's built on the same game engine as the excellent 007: Everything or Nothing, From Russia with Love actually regresses in some ways. The precision targeting system from Everything or Nothing was superior, as was the fluid weapon selection.

The graphics are still top-notch, particularly the character modeling. Kudos to the developers for nailing Sean Connery's physique and movement—the flashy, violent hand-to-hand moves are particularly well-done. And the sound editing in the game is noticeably great. In one cut-scene, Bond scuffles with the main bad guy in a train car, and the sounds of them colliding with nearby tables and walls is spot-on. The voice acting is solid, as well. Connery's voice isn't as strong and youthful as it was in 1964, though, so sometimes his face doesn't quite match his speech. —CHRIS S.

TONY HAWK'S AMERICAN SK8LAND

RATING: 6.0

PLATFORM: GAME BOY ADVANCE
PUBLISHER: ACTIVISION
DEVELOPER: VICARIOUS VISIONS
ESRB: EVERYONE

After spending some time with Tony Hawk's American Sk8land, you realize that if you've played one Hawk game on the GBA, you've played them all. Sk8land marks the Birdman's sixth time out on the small screen, and it contains all of the things that this series is known for—for better or for worse. The controls are what you'd expect from a Hawk title, and visually the game looks like an upgrade from the previous THUG titles. Where Sk8land falls flat, however, is in the overall park designs. The wide-open levels are harder to navigate than those of any previous Hawk title. You'll probably wish you had an onscreen map a la the GCN and DS versions, but no dice. This game brings nothing worth mentioning to the franchise, and almost feels like a step backward. —PETE M.

ALSO THIS MONTH

Peter Jackson's King Kong (GCN/DS) plots the story of the famous ape in both first- and third-person perspectives. The 2-D title **Kong: The 8th Wonder of the World (GBA)** covers the same ground. Expect Kong-sized reviews of the Ubisoft titles next month, along with a review of Activision's WWII epic **Call of Duty 2: Big Red One (GCN)**. . . . Adding to the GCN and DS versions of Buena Vista's **The Chronicles of Narnia: The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe**, the Pevensie siblings score a hat trick with the GBA iteration of their tale. . . . Mr. Incredible and Frozone go underground with a 2-D GBA telling of **The Incredibles: Rise of the Underminer** from THQ. . . . Majesco's **ATV Quad Frenzy (DS)** lets you four-wheel over hills, dales and snow drifts. . . . If four wheels are 14 too few for you, **Big Mutha Truckers (DS)** from Destination is the road trip you're looking for. . . . Reprising tracks from previous Burnout racing titles, **Burnout Legends (DS)** from EA backfires due to poor play control and sloppy hit detection. . . . Sanrio's iconic feline gets Martha-Stewart-obsessive with decorations and food preparation in **Hello Kitty: Happy Party Pals (GBA)** from THQ. . . . With more wild 'dos than a Carrot Top convention, Ubisoft's **Trollz: Hair Affair (GBA)** offers side-scrolling action and minigames. . . . Bad fairies are running amok in Timmy Turner's latest, The **Fairly OddParents!: Clash with the Anti-World (GBA)** from THQ. . . . In Crave's **Sky Dancers (GBA)**, good fairies float over snakes and garden gnomes. . . . **Snood 2: On Vacation (DS/GBA)** from Destination offers puzzle-piece-matching play with famous landmarks in the background. . . . Determine who is the fairest in the land by using elbow drops and headlocks in Activision's **Shrek SuperSlam (GCN/DS/GBA)** . . . . Penny Proud hip-hops through six environments while engaging in dance and DJ minigames in **Disney's The Proud Family (GBA)** from Buena Vista Games. . . . They march, they slide and they hatch harebrained schemes; Madagascar's penguins are back in **Madagascar: Operation Penguin (GBA)** from Activision. . . . And who let the **Dogz (GBA)** out?

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[ARCHIVE]

ALMOST PERFECT

A handful of new archive entries rate 9.0 or better this month. Check out Ultimate Spider-Man (GCN), Tony Hawk's American Wasteland (GCN), Trauma Center: Under the Knife (DS), Metroid Prime Pinball (DS) and Gunstar Super Heroes (GBA). There's something for everyone and for every system.

NINTENDO GAMECUBE

TITLE	SCORE	PUBLISHER	VOL.	ESRB
Alien Hominid	6.5	0–3	187	T
Animaniacs: The Great Edgar Hunt	3.0	Ignition	190	E
Baten Kaitos: Eternal Wings and the Lost Ocean	9.0	Namco	187	T
Batman Begins	6.5	Electronic Arts	194	T
Battalion Wars	8.5	Nintendo	197	T
Bratz: Rock Angelz	N/A	THQ	198	E
Cabela's Big Game Hunter 2005 Adventures	4.5	Activision	189	T
Cabela's Outdoor Adventures	6.5	Activision	198	T
Call of Duty: Finest Hour	7.0	Activision	187	T
Charlie and the Chocolate Factory	2.5	Global Star	195	E
Chicken Little	6.0	Buena Vista	198	E10+
Crash Tag Team Racing	7.0	VU Games	198	E10+
Dance Dance Revolution: Mario Mix	7.5	Nintendo	198	E
Digimon World 4	7.0	Bandai	193	E
Donkey Kong Jungle Beat	9.0	Nintendo	191	E10+
Donkey Konga 2	7.5	Nintendo	192	T
Dora the Explorer: Journey to the Purple Planet	N/A	Global Star	198	EC
Dragon Ball Z: Budokai 2	5.0	Atari	188	T
Dragon Ball Z: Sagas	5.5	Atari	192	T
Fantastic Four	6.0	Activision	194	T
FIFA Soccer 06	9.0	Electronic Arts	197	E
FIFA Street	6.0	Electronic Arts	191	E
Fight Night: Round 2	8.0	Electronic Arts	191	T
Fire Emblem: Path of Radiance	9.5	Nintendo	197	T
Frogger: Ancient Shadow	5.5	Konami	197	E
Geist	5.0	Nintendo	196	M
GoldenEye: Rogue Agent	5.5	Electronic Arts	188	T
Harvest Moon: Another Wonderful Life	7.5	Natsume	195	E
Hello Kitty: Roller Rescue	5.0	Namco	196	E
The Incredible Hulk: Ultimate Destruction	8.5	VU Games	196	T
The Incredibles: Rise of the Underminer	7.5	THQ	198	E10+
Intellivision Lives!	3.0	Crave	187	E
International Golf and Tennis	3.0	Ignition	193	E
Kids Next Door: Operation V.I.D.E.O.G.A.M.E.	N/A	Global Star	198	E10+
Killer 7	8.5	Capcom	193	M
King Arthur	4.5	Konami	187	T
Knights of the Temple	5.0	Aspyr	194	M
Lego *Star Wars*	6.5	Eidos	198	E
Lemony Snicket's A Series of Unfortunate Events	7.0	Activision	188	E
The Lord of the Rings: The Third Age	6.5	Electronic Arts	187	T
Madagascar	6.0	Activision	194	E10+
Madden NFL 06	9.0	Electronic Arts	195	E
Mario Party 6	7.5	Nintendo	188	E
Mario Power Tennis	7.0	Nintendo	187	E
Mario Superstar Baseball	9.0	Nintendo	196	E
Mark Davis: Pro Bass Challenge	5.0	Natsume	198	E
Marvel Nemesis: Rise of the Imperfects	7.0	Electronic Arts	197	T
MC Groovz: Dancecraze	5.0	Mad Catz	189	E
Medal of Honor: European Assault	8.0	Electronic Arts	194	T
Metroid Prime 2 Echoes	9.5	Nintendo	187	T
Midway Arcade Treasures 2	7.5	Midway	188	M
Midway Arcade Treasures 3	6.5	Midway	197	E
Mortal Kombat: Deception	7.5	Midway	191	M
MVP Baseball 2005	9.0	Electronic Arts	191	E
Namco 50th Anniversary Arcade Collection	7.0	Namco	197	E10+
NBA Live 06	5.5	Electronic Arts	198	E
NBA Street V3	7.5	Electronic Arts	190	E
Need for Speed Underground 2	7.5	Electronic Arts	188	E
NFL Street 2	7.0	Electronic Arts	189	E
NHL 06	8.5	Electronic Arts	198	E10+
Nicktoons: Nicktoons Unite!	N/A	THQ	198	E
One Piece: Grand Battle	6.5	Bandai	197	T
Pinball Hall of Fame	4.5	Crave	189	E
The Polar Express	5.0	THQ	187	E
Pokémon XD: Gale of Darkness	8.5	Nintendo	197	E
Prince of Persia: Warrior Within	9.0	Ubisoft	188	M
Rave Master	5.0	Konami	192	T
Resident Evil 4	10.0	Capcom	189	M
Robots	5.0	VU Games	190	E
Scaler	6.5	Global Star	188	E
Scooby-Doo!: Unmasked	7.5	THQ	197	E
Sonic Gems Collection	8.5	Sega	195	E
Spartan: Total Warrior	8.5	Sega	197	M
Spyro: A Hero's Tail	5.5	VU Games	187	E
SSX On Tour	8.0	Electronic Arts	198	E10+
Star Fox: Assault	8.0	Nintendo	189	T
Strike Force Bowling	4.5	Crave	190	E
Tak: The Great Juju Challenge	8.5	THQ	197	E
Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles: Mutant Melee	3.0	Konami	192	T
Tiger Woods PGA Tour 06	9.0	Electronic Arts	197	E
TimeSplitters: Future Perfect	8.5	Electronic Arts	191	M
Tom Clancy's Ghost Recon 2	4.5	Ubisoft	192	T
Tom Clancy's Splinter Cell: Chaos Theory	8.0	Ubisoft	192	M
Tony Hawk's American Wasteland	9.0	Activision	198	T
Ty the Tasmanian Tiger: Night of the Quinkan	6.0	Activision	198	E10+
Ultimate Spider-Man	9.0	Activision	198	T
The Urbz: Sims in the City	7.0	Electronic Arts	187	T
Viewtiful Joe 2	9.0	Capcom	187	T
Virtua Quest	5.5	Sega	189	T
World Series of Poker	4.5	Activision	198	E10+
WWE: Day of Reckoning 2	8.0	THQ	197	T
X-Men Legends II: Rise of Apocalypse	7.5	Activision	198	T
Zatch Bell!: Mamodo Battles	6.0	Bandai	198	T

NINTENDO DS

TITLE	SCORE	PUBLISHER	VOL.	ESRB
Advance Wars: Dual Strike	9.0	Nintendo	196	E
Asphalt Urban GT	6.5	Ubisoft	188	E
Bomberman	7.0	Ubisoft	194	E
Castlevania: Dawn of Sorrow	9.0	Konami	197	T
Dig Dug Digging Strike	7.0	Namco	198	E
Feel the Magic: XY/XX	9.0	Sega	188	T
FIFA Soccer 06	8.0	Electronic Arts	198	E
Frogger: Helmet Chaos	5.0	Konami	196	E
Ford Racing 3	N/A	Destination	198	E
Frogger: Helmet Chaos	5.0	Konami	196	E
GoldenEye: Rogue Agent	6.0	Electronic Arts	195	T
Kim Possible: Kimmunicator	6.0	Buena Vista	198	E
Kirby: Canvas Curse	9.0	Nintendo	194	E
Lost in Blue	8.0	Konami	197	E10+
Lunar: Dragon Song	7.0	Ubisoft	197	E10+
Madagascar	7.0	Activision	194	E
Madden NFL 06	8.0	Electronic Arts	196	E
Madden NFL 2005	7.5	Electronic Arts	188	E
Marvel Nemesis: Rise of the Imperfects	5.0	Electronic Arts	198	E10+
Mega Man Battle Network 5: Double Team DS	7.0	Capcom	198	E
Meteos	9.0	Nintendo	194	E
Metroid Prime Pinball	9.5	Nintendo	198	E
Mr. Driller: Drill Spirits	7.0	Namco	188	E
Nanostray	8.0	Majesco	195	E
Need for Speed Underground 2	6.0	Electronic Arts	193	E
Nicktoons: Nicktoons Unite!	N/A	THQ	198	E
Nintendogs	8.5	Nintendo	196	E
Pac 'N Roll	7.5	Namco	196	E
Pac-Pix	8.0	Namco	192	E
Phoenix Wright: Ace Attorney	8.0	Capcom	197	T
Ping Pals	5.0	THQ	188	E
Pokémon Dash	5.0	Nintendo	191	E
Polarium	7.5	Nintendo	192	E
Puyo Pop Fever	6.0	Atlus	193	E
Rayman DS	6.5	Ubisoft	191	E
Real Time Conflict: Shogun Empires	7.0	Namco	198	E10+

REVIEWER NOTES

POKéMON EMERALD

Gamers might still turn up their noses at Pokémon games, but few can deny the quality of Pokémon Emerald's play mechanics and story. And few games can pack in as many hours of gameplay as Emerald does. Sure, the dialog can be cheesy, but then again, it's a rare RPG that has memorably great dialog. —Chris S.

>DIG DUG DIGGING STRIKE

Think of DDDS as what would happen if Tim Burton remade Dig Dug, putting the classic 2-D gameplay to use in a quest to defeat 3-D bosses by sinking islands. It's insanely inspired, though on the short side.

—Steven G.

BATTALION WARS

British developer Kuju's sense of humor makes the first GCN game in Nintendo's Wars series witty fun, especially during between-mission cinematics, and the game's mix of third-person direct combat and real-time-strategy options keeps you battle-ready from mission start to mission accomplished. The comical behavior of some of the units makes them act unpredictably at times, but the overall playing experience is a satisfying new take on war gaming. —George S.

>MARIO POWER TENNIS

I was a big fan of Mario Tennis for the N64, so I was pretty excited for its GameCube successor. I came away a little disappointed —the Power Shots detracted from the rhythm and enjoyment of the game.

—Chris S.

TITLE	SCORE	PUBLISHER	VOL	ESRB
Retro Atari Classics	5.0	Atari	191	E
Ridge Racer DS	7.0	Namco	188	E
Robots	4.5	VU Games	190	E
Space Invaders Revolution	4.0	Mastiff	196	E
Spider-Man 2	6.5	Activision	188	E
SpongeBob SquarePants: The Yellow Avenger	3.5	THQ	198	E
Sprung	7.5	Ubisoft	188	T
Spyro: Shadow Legacy	6.5	VU Games	198	E
Star Wars Episode III: Revenge of the Sith	8.0	Ubisoft	193	E10+
Super Mario 64 DS	8.5	Nintendo	188	E
Tak: The Great Juju Challenge	7.5	THQ	197	E
Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles 3: Mutant Nightmare	6.0	Konami	198	E
Texas Hold 'Em Poker DS	5.0	Majesco	198	E
Tiger Woods PGA Tour 2005	8.0	Electronic Arts	188	E
Tom Clancy's Rainbow Six: Lockdown	6.0	Ubisoft	197	M
Tom Clancy's Splinter Cell: Chaos Theory	8.0	Ubisoft	194	T
Trace Memory	8.5	Nintendo	197	T
Trauma Center: Under the Knife	9.0	Atlus	198	T
Ultimate Spider-Man	6.5	Activision	198	E10+
The Urbz: Sims in the City	7.5	Electronic Arts	188	E
WarioWare: Touched!	9.0	Nintendo	190	E
Whac-A-Mole	N/A	Activision Value	197	E
World Championship Poker: Deluxe Series	5.0	Crave	192	E
Yoshi Touch & Go	7.0	Nintendo	191	E
Yu-Gi-Oh!: Nightmare Troubadour	8.0	Konami	196	E
Viewtiful Joe: Double Trouble	7.0	Capcom	198	T
Zoo Keeper	4.5	Ignition	189	E
Zoo Tycoon DS	7.5	THQ	197	E
GAME BOY ADVANCE				
Ace Combat Advance	4.0	Namco	190	E
Animaniacs: Lights! Camera! Action!	4.5	Ignition	190	E
Atomic Betty	N/A	Namco	198	E
Backyard Football 2006	N/A	Atari	197	E
Backyard Skateboarding	N/A	Atari	198	E
Banjo Pilot	7.0	THQ	189	E
Barbie and the Magic of Pegasus	N/A	VU Games	197	E
Batman Begins	5.5	Electronic Arts	194	T
The Berenstain Bears and the Spooky Old Tree	N/A	Namco	197	E
Board Game Classics	N/A	Destination	197	E
The Bible Game	N/A	Crave	197	E
Bionicle: Maze of Shadows	N/A	THQ	198	E
Bratz: Rock Angelz	N/A	THQ	198	E
Cabela's Big Game Hunter 2005 Adventures	2.0	Activision	188	T
Centipede Compilation	5.0	Destination	197	E
Charlie and the Chocolate Factory	3.5	Global Star	195	E
Chicken Little	N/A	Buena Vista	198	E
Chicken Shoot	N/A	Destination	198	E10+
Codename Kids Next Door—Operation S.O.D.A.	4.5	Global Star	187	E
Connect Four Compilation	5.0	Destination	197	E
Danny Phantom: The Ultimate Enemy	N/A	THQ	197	E
Dead to Rights	5.0	Destination	187	T
Disney's Magical Quest 3 Starring Mickey & Donald	5.5	Capcom	194	E
DK: King of Swing	8.0	Nintendo	197	E
Donkey Kong Country 2	6.5	Nintendo	187	E
Donkey Kong Country 3	8.0	Nintendo	198	E
Dragon Ball GT: Transformation	5.5	Atari	196	E10+
Driv3r	5.5	Atari	198	T
Duel Masters: Kaijudo Showdown	4.0	Atari	187	E
Duel Masters: Shadow of the Code	5.5	Atari	198	E
Dynasty Warriors Advance	7.0	Nintendo	196	E10+
Elf	2.0	Crave	187	E
everGirl	N/A	THQ	198	E
F/A 18F: Super Hornet	3.5	Majesco	188	E
Fantastic Four	6.5	Activision	194	E10+
Fear Factor Unleashed	3.0	Hip Interactive	187	T
FIFA Soccer 06	7.0	Electronic Arts	198	E
Final Fantasy I & II: Dawn of Souls	8.5	Square Enix	187	E
Fire Emblem: The Sacred Stones	9.0	Nintendo	193	E
Ford Racing 3	N/A	Destination	198	E
Gauntlet Compilation	6.5	Destination	197	E
Golden Nugget Casino	2.0	Majesco	188	E
Gumby vs. the Astrobots	5.0	Namco	196	E
Gunstar Super Heroes	9.5	Sega	198	E10+
Harvest Moon: More Friends of Mineral Town	8.5	Natsume	195	E

>GUNSTAR SUPER HEROES

So, have you bought Gunstar Super Heroes yet? Why not? As GBA games go, it just doesn't get any better than Treasure's latest action opus. If you're picking up a GBA Micro, it's the perfect showpiece for that superbright screen.

—Steve T.

NHL 06

Ever since Midway dropped the NHL Hitz franchise, we hockey fans have been less than optimistic that another good hockey game would ever see the light of day. With the NHL back on ice, though, EA has stepped up its NHL franchise and finally delivered a hockey sim that's worth playing. NHL 06 dramatically tightens up the controls from previous games while adding some much-needed excitement to the franchise. And the top-notch presentation doesn't hurt, either. —Andy M.

>BILLY HATCHER AND THE GIANT EGG

Admittedly, a boy in a chicken suit is an unfortunate choice as a main character, but try to look past that. Billy Hatcher is an amazing platformer, so if you like the genre, buy it immediately.

—Chris H.

TRAUMA CENTER: UNDER THE KNIFE

Trauma Center expects a lot from players, quickly teaching you one stylus procedure after another and leaving it up to you to figure out which to use and when. And just when you've mastered how to perform complex touch-driven operations on normal maladies (excising tumors, lasering lesions, suctioning pus, injecting stabilizers, etc.), the game swerves from its *ER*-ish story into an eerie *X-Files* conspiracy, introducing paranormal parasites that demand complex moves done in a hurry. Tricky stuff that's fiendishly addictive.

—Steven G.

TITLE	SCORE	PUBLISHER	VOL	ESRB
Herbie: Fully Loaded	5.5	Disney Interactive	194	E
Hot Wheels: Stunt Track Challenge	6.0	THQ	188	E
Hugo: The Evil Mirror	3.0	Namco	192	E
It's Mr. Pants	6.5	THQ	187	E
James Pond Codename Robocod	4.0	Valcon Games	195	E
Juka and the Monophonic Menace	5.0	Orbital Media	196	E
Killer 3-D Pool	4.0	Destination	192	E
Kim Possible III: Team Possible	6.5	Disney Interactive	195	E
Kingdom Hearts: Chain of Memories	7.5	Square Enix	188	E
KLAX Compilation	4.0	Destination	197	E
Klonoa 2: Dream Champ Tournament	8.5	Namco	190	E
The Legend of Zelda: The Minish Cap	9.5	Nintendo	189	E
LEGO Knights' Kingdom	5.0	THQ	187	E
LEGO *Star Wars*	6.5	Eidos	192	E
Lizzie McGuire 3	N/A	Buena Vista	197	E
The Lord of the Rings: The Third Age	8.0	Electronic Arts	187	T
Madagascar	7.0	Activision	194	E
Madden NFL 06	7.0	Electronic Arts	196	E
Mario Party Advance	6.0	Nintendo	191	E
Mega Man Battle Network 5: Team Colonel & Team Protoman	6.5	Capcom	194	E
Mega Man Zero 4	8.5	Capcom	198	E
Metal Slug Advance	8.5	SNK	188	T
Millipede Compilation	5.0	Destination	197	E
Monopoly	5.0	Destination	188	E
Monster Trucks	3.5	Majesco	189	E
Mr. Driller 2	5.0	Namco	193	E
Namco Museum 50th Anniversary Arcade Collection	5.5	Namco	197	E
Need for Speed Underground 2	5.0	Electronic Arts	187	E
Nicktoons: Nicktoons Unite!	N/A	THQ	198	E
The Nightmare Before Christmas: The Pumpkin King	6.5	Buena Vista	198	E10+
One Piece	8.0	Bandai	197	E10+
Pac-Man Pinball Advance	7.0	Namco	193	E
Pac-Man World	6.0	Destination	188	E
Pac-Man World 2	6.0	Destination	197	E
Paperboy Compilation	5.5	Destination	197	E
Pokémon Emerald	6.5	Nintendo	192	E
The Polar Express	5.5	THQ	187	E
Pong Compilation	5.5	Destination	197	E
Popeye: Rush for Spinach	5.0	Namco	193	E
Power Rangers: S.P.D.	4.0	THQ	196	E10+
Racing Gears Advance	7.5	Orbital Media	189	E
Rayman: Hoodlum's Revenge	5.5	Ubisoft	191	E
Rebelstar: Tactical Command	7.0	Namco	197	E10+
Riviera: The Promised Land	6.5	Atlus	194	T
Risk Compilation	7.0	Destination	197	E
Robots	4.5	VU Games	190	E
Scrabble Blast	7.5	Destination	193	E
Scrabble Jr. Compilation	4.5	Destination	197	E
Shaman King: Legacy of the Spirits—Soaring Hawk/Sprinting Wolf	3.5	Konami	191	E
Shaman King: Master of Spirits 2	6.5	Konami	196	E 10+
Shrek 2: Beg For Mercy	4.5	Activision	188	E
Sigma Star Saga	8.5	Namco	195	E10+
Smashing Drive	4.5	Destination	188	E
Spy Hunter Compilation	4.5	Destination	197	E
Star Wars Episode III: Revenge of the Sith	7.0	Ubisoft	193	E10+
Strawberry Shortcake: Summertime Adventure	3.0	Majesco	189	E
Super Army War	6.5	Atlus	190	T
Tak: The Great Juju Challenge	4.0	THQ	197	E
Teen Titans	6.0	Majesco	198	E10+
Texas Hold 'Em Poker	3.0	Majesco	188	E
Tokyo Xtreme Racer Advance	3.5	Crave	193	E
Ty the Tasmanian Tiger 2: Bush Rescue	4.5	Electronic Arts	187	E
Ultimate Arcade Games	N/A	Telegames	198	E
Ultimate Spider-Man	6.0	Activision	198	E10+
The Urbz: Sims in the City	7.5	Electronic Arts	187	E
WarioWare: Twisted!	8.5	Nintendo	193	E
W.I.T.C.H.	N/A	Buena Vista	197	E
World Championship Poker	3.5	Crave	188	E
WWE Survivor Series	3.0	THQ	187	T
Yoshi Topsy-Turvy	7.0	Nintendo	194	E
Yu-Gi-Oh!: Destiny Board Traveler	2.5	Konami	188	E
Yu Yu Hakusho: Tournament Tactics	3.0	Atari	187	E
Zatch Bell!: Electric Arena	N/A	Bandai	198	E10+
Zoo	4.5	Ignition	196	E

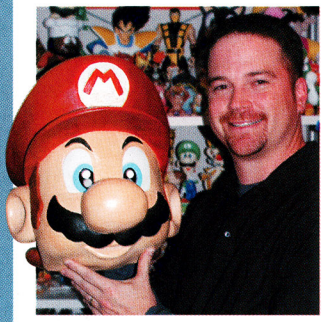
COMMUNITY

COLLECTING

SWAG

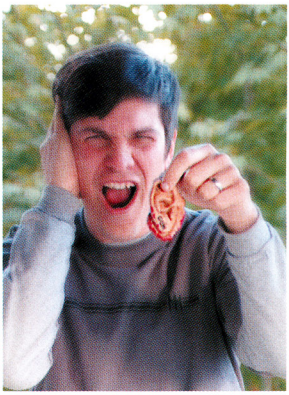
For months now, we've been running photos of your video game collectibles in Community—we decided it was time to show you some of our own swag. We asked a handful of coworkers to bring in their most prized game-related possession. Not surprisingly, we got some pretty strange stuff.

By Andy Myers



WHO ARE YOU?
You may recognize this Mario mask from the Nintendo "Who Are You?" ads. Nintendo Power business director Casey Pelkey keeps one of the masks in his office, atop his massive collection of Nintendo figurines. (His four rarest figurines are featured at the top of this page.)

SLIGHTLY OBSESSED
NP newb Chris Hoffman's collection of Mega Man toys is always frighteningly tidy. He has more than 20 figures from his favorite game series in a shrine-like formation on his desk, the centerpiece of which is a framed drawing (created especially for Chris at E3 2003) by Mega Man creator Keiji Inafune.



AHHHH! MY EAR!!!
At a Neversoft press event in which the developer revealed western-themed game Gun (reviewed in this issue) to the world, I received a complimentary Gun-branded severed ear.

NP REPRESENT!
Classic gamer extraordinaire Pete Michaud is seen here holding the June/July 1988 issue of Nintendo Fun Club News (the predecessor to Nintendo Power), as well as an old pack of Mario napkins. Note the mailing label on Pete's magazine—he was only eight years old when it came out.

FULL STACK
You may have played Gyromite using the NES R.O.B. accessory, but Stack-Up (the only other game to utilize R.O.B.) is much harder to come by. I brought in my copy of the game, complete with all its original accessories.

LEGENDARY SCROLL
Fewer than 400 of these amazing scrolls from The Legend of Zelda: The Wind Waker exist—and one of them is owned by Nintendo employee A.J. Blount. We won't tell you where A.J. lives.

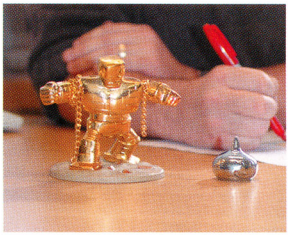
HEAD GEAR
The Slippy cap (Star Fox) and Moogle beanie (Final Fantasy) shown above are often worn around the NP office, usually when someone loses a bet.

YOU MUST WHIP IT
NP writer Chris Shepperd keeps his Castlevania whip (which he received from Konami as a promotional item for Castlevania: Dawn of Sorrow) handy for motivating his coworkers to toil harder. He's cracked the whip so many times that the tip broke off (true story).

TREASURE CHEST
The origin of NSider forum master Andy Hartpence's trunk is unknown—a friend of his found it at a garage sale a few years back. The trunk is plastered with Mario and Zelda art.

SIGNATURE SWAG
None of the NP crew members were surprised when Steve Thomason brought in his book of Castlevania art signed by Koji Igarashi and his copy of NiGHTS into Dreams (for Sega CD) autographed by Yuji Naka.

TROPHY ROOM
The LEGO-based trophy in Dan Owsen's office was one of two trophies presented to Shigeru Miyamoto at the Game Developer's Conference many years back, in honor of his work on Ocarina of Time. Miyamoto kept one trophy, and gave the other to Dan. Why is Dan deserving of such an honor? It may have something to do with the fact that he wrote the English text for the NES title The Legend of Zelda back in the day.



METAL WARRIOR
In 1989, Scott Pelland (NP's managing editor) wrote the English text for the NES classic RPG Dragon Warrior. The game's developer, Enix, presented Scott with two metal figures (depicting Goldman and Metal Slime) to thank him for his work on the game. It is unknown how many of these were produced, but they are likely the rarest items presented in this article, other than Dan's Zelda trophy.

ART

Ink to Think About

We've seen some pretty wild game-related tattoos, but Tony Etienne's totem pole easily takes the cake.

Next time your parents cringe when you mention getting a tattoo, try to imagine yourself with a tattoo at age 80—will you still want the same imagery branded on your body? In Tony's case, the answer is definitely yes. The 30-year-old gamer from Southern California put a lot of thought and time into designing his first tattoo, which represents his history with video games. "As the totem pole tells a story or a legend, this tattoo that I've got on my leg tells about my childhood and my family, about me and my brothers growing up together," says Etienne.

When Tony was ready to get the tattoo, he hired West Hollywood tattoo artist Dan Sartor to do the honors. The ordeal lasted more than five hours—for Tony, it was worth every second. "I'm not going to lie to you—hell yes, it hurt. It hurt a lot, but it was a very interesting experience."

—Andy M.

Photo by Greg Downing

COSPLAY

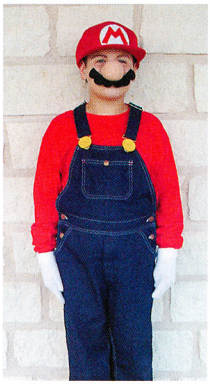
Classic Threads

A few months back, we put a call out to readers to send us their cosplay photos—the response was overwhelming. Here's a small sample of the many photos we've received so far. Keep 'em coming!

Halloween has come and gone, but for many Nintendo fans, wearing costumes is a year-round affair. Nintendo cosplayers are a diverse bunch. Some spend months creating maticulous costumes from scratch, while others are content repurposing old clothes, as long as the spirit is right. To the right are photos of three of the coolest costumes we've seen recently. Starting with the top-left image and moving counterclockwise:

1. Joshua Fischer dresses up as Mario (pretty impressive costume for a nine-year-old!).
2. Jen Lockhart poses in a beautiful Priscilla costume from Fire Emblem.
3. Jen's sister Tifa Lockhart shows off her threads as Lyn from Fire Emblem.

—Andy M.



VIVA EGS

It was a three-day fiesta in Mexico City as video game fans packed the halls of the Electronic Game Show.

From October 22-24, gamers filled the Mexico World Trade Center to attend the Electronic Game Show. EGS is the largest video game show in Mexico, and unlike E3 (and virtually every other video game show in the western hemisphere), EGS was open to the public. So over the three long days, close to 30,000 game fans took the opportunity to play some of the hottest upcoming games.

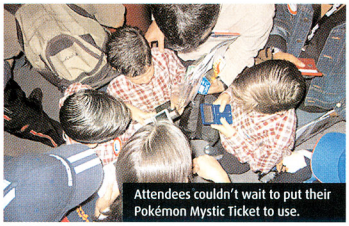
Nintendo's booth was unbelievably crowded for the duration of the event. Mario Kart DS, Animal Crossing: Wild World and Nintendogs were among the games that show attendees could get their hands on. Bark-mode stations were set up for Nintendogs, and over the course of the show more than 1,700 people who brought their Nintendogs games picked up a special Haylie Duff version of the "star" sunglasses for their precocious pups. Nintendo also hosted wildly popular daily Super Smash Bros. Melee tournaments; the top smashers were eligible to win loads of awesome prizes.

Game piracy is a significant problem in Mexico, so to encourage better buying practices, showgoers were able to prepurchase discounted tickets if they bought a video game from a legitimate retail vendor up to 45 days before the event. These VIP attendees received priority access to the games on the show floor, and they were also treated to special back-room hands-on time with Super Mario Strikers, as well as special games in other booths. The initiative was a big success—over 3,000 people waited in line just to see Mario play Mexico's most popular sport.

Nintendo enlisted the help of Latin American gaming magazine *Atomix* to show Dance Dance Revolution: Mario Mix. *Atomix*'s booth was set up a like a nightclub, complete with a bouncer and trippy lighting. Inside, DDR competitions went on all day long, with the best movers and groovers winning the brand-new Hot Rod Red Nintendo DS, along with the Game Boy Micro.

Pokémon also had a huge presence at the show—so big that it couldn't be contained within the boundaries of Nintendo's booth. In its second year of having its own space, the Pokémon booth was crowded with gamers looking to glimpse Pokémon XD: Gale of Darkness, as well as get hands-on demos of the Pokémon Trading Card Game. To really add to the mayhem of the Pokémon booth, hosts were giving away the Mystic Ticket; fans waited for hours, GBAs in hand, to get the item.

The show was a total success for Nintendo and the video game industry, but most of all for the fans. As the popularity of video games increases in Latin America, expect more and more news to come from great shows like EGS. —**Chris S.**



Attendees couldn't wait to put their Pokémon Mystic Ticket to use.

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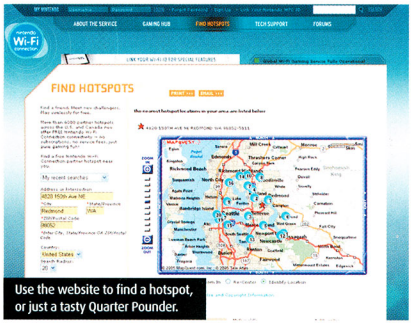


Use the website to find a hotspot, or just a tasty Quarter Pounder.

One Hot Spot

So you got your copy of Mario Kart, but you're still not sure about this Wi-Fi business. Rest assured; nintendowifi.com has all the answers. Looking for a place to get online? Use the hotspot locator. Wanna get your home network up and running? Check out the tech support. Everything you need to get connected is in one place. We promise.

OCTOBER'S ART OF THE MONTH

ARTIST:
CRYSTALFAIRY12

SUBJECT:
Pokémon XD

Computer-Drawn Category

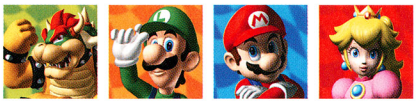
ARTIST:
FEU

SUBJECT:
Pokémon XD

Hand-Drawn Category

This month, readers went in more directions than an evolved Eevee to show their Pokémon XD creativity. Submit your own masterpieces at **forums.nintendo.com**.

Custom-Made Avatars — **By Tin Chan**



Sage Reviews

With all the great reviews coming in, it's getting hard to select the best one! Keep up the awesome work!

Sage Review of the Month

Pokémon XD: Gale of Darkness

reviewed by
POWER-ON

XD Follows the events of Colosseum, setting you on another quest to cleanse the world of evil. You begin with a lone Eevee, but your team quickly grows as you Snag and Purify Shadow Pokémon from your enemies.

The purification process has been sped up greatly by use of the helpful but complicated Purify Chamber. The battle system, however, hasn't changed and there is only one Pokémon in the game that you can't catch in any of the other games. The addition of the wild Pokémon for you to catch is a step in the right direction for the console game, but doesn't come close to what is in the handheld games.

Along with new, frightening locations and just as frightening people, many of the familiar places and people from Pokémon Colosseum look more beautiful than ever. Also, many of the Trainers now have as many animations as the Pokémon themselves, which still look gorgeous on your TV screen.

You either like Pokémon or you don't, and this game might not be enough to change your mind either way. Overall if you aren't really a Pokémon fan and have played Colosseum before, then this game may not be for you. But if you are a big fan of the series and want a tough challenge, then this game is worth a chance.

Excerpts from Other Sage Reviews

Mr. Driller: Drill Spirits
"The game graphics are like a GBA game—they don't really push the DS console. The use of the touch screen is minimal and is used only for basic things. "—LEAFBALL

Marvel Nemesis: Rise of the Imperfects (GCN)
"The plot is a pretty interesting one, but it's very hard to understand through the use of mediocre cutscenes, and only a few videos show the stories of the new Imperfects."—HENSHIN!

What's a Sage?
Sages are members of the NSider online community that are put through the wringer and hand-picked by Nintendo. They get tons of special privileges, including opportunities to review games for Nintendo Power magazine.

A Global Community

As the world gears up for the Nintendo Wi-Fi Connection, we're getting anxious to see what you think of 24/7 multiplayer gaming. Send us your opinions, anecdotes and philosophical waxings—we'll choose the best of them for an upcoming issue of Nintendo Power.

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GOOD TIMES

Long before Wi-Fi, Nintendo was creating innovative ways for gamers to play together. This month's quiz celebrates some memorable moments in the history of multiplayer gaming. Visit **nintendopower.com/quiz** for the answers today, or wait for your next issue.

1 What was the first Nintendo home console that came with four controller ports?
a. Nintendo Entertainment System
b. Super NES
c. N64
d. Nintendo GameCube

2 Which of these characters was unlockable in the N64 brawler Super Smash Bros.?

a. Ness

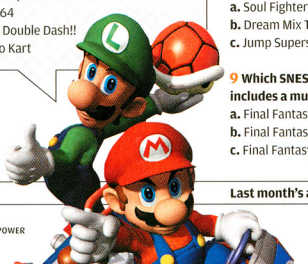
b. Kirby

c. Fox

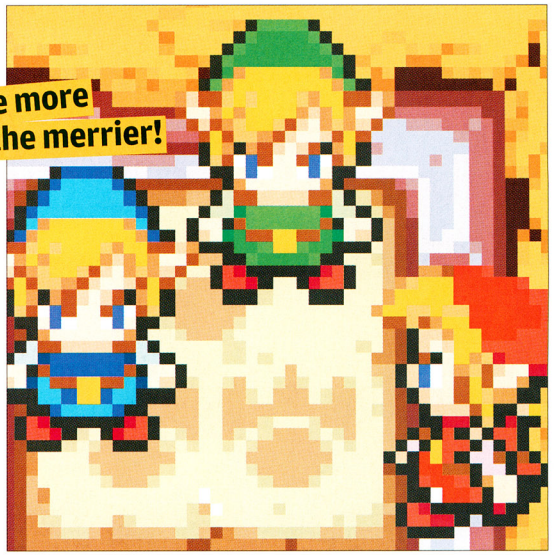
3 The first four-player game for the original Game Boy came bundled with a four-player link cable. What was the name of the game?
a. V-Rally
b. F-1 Race
c. Gauntlet II
d. Alleyway

4 Of the multiplayer GCN titles below, which did not require each player to connect a Game Boy Advance to the GCN for use as a controller?
a. Final Fantasy: Crystal Chronicles
b. Pac-Man Vs.
c. The Legend of Zelda: Four Swords Adventures
d. Baldur's Gate: Dark Alliance

5 Which Mario Kart game allowed players to control a driver and a passenger?
a. Mario Kart: Super Circuit
b. Mario Kart 64
c. Mario Kart: Double Dash!!
d. Super Mario Kart



The more the merrier!



PIXEL-PERFECT

NAME THAT SCREENSHOT

This game did wonders for multiplayer gaming, blurring the lines between cooperation and competition. Can you identify the game that had players loving each other one minute and hating each other the next?

LAST MONTH'S FEATURE:
EARTHBOUND (SNES)

6 What popular action-RPG for Super NES supported three-player co-op mode?
a. The Legend of Zelda: A Link to the Past
b. Lufia II: Rise of the Sinistrals
c. Secret of Mana

7 What NES peripheral allowed players to connect four controllers to their NES and used infrared technology?
a. NES Four Score
b. NES Advantage
c. NES Satellite
d. NES Max

8 Name the Japan-only four-player fighting game that features Solid Snake and Optimus Prime as playable characters.
a. Soul Fighter
b. Dream Mix TV: World Fighters
c. Jump Superstars

9 Which SNES Final Fantasy game listed below includes a multiplayer mode?
a. Final Fantasy II
b. Final Fantasy III
c. Final Fantasy: Mystic Quest

10 Which of these characters is not playable in Super Mario 64 DS?

a. Luigi

b. Wario

c. Toad

11 What is the name of the SNES multiplayer adapter that was created by Hudson Soft to coincide with its release of Super Bomberman, and was compatible with dozens of other four- and five-player SNES titles?
a. Super Link
b. Super Satellite
c. Super Multitap

12 Which of these franchises has not been the subject of a party game?
a. Mario
b. Pac-Man
c. Sonic
d. Resident Evil

Last month's answers: 1: d, 2: b, 3: a, 4: c, 5: c, 6: a, 7: b, 8: a, 9: c, 10: c (Jeff), 11: a

NINTENDO POWER

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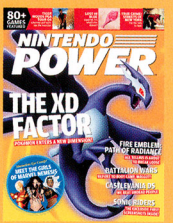
NINTENDO POWER MAGAZINE

DECEMBER 2005, VOLUME 198
Way of the Gun (Gun), On the War Path (Fire Emblem: Path of Radiance), Return to Babylon (Prince of Persia: The Two Thrones, Inside Zelda, NP Top 200, DS Bring It!, International Treasure, Mining Orre's Pokémon (Pokémon XD: Gale of Darkness), Bite the Big Apple (Ultimate Spider-Man), Tony Hawk's American Sk8land, Mega Man X Collection, From Russia with Love, Mario & Luigi: Partners in Time, Mario Party 7, Harry Potter and the Goblet of Fire, Need for Speed: Most Wanted, The Chronicles of Narnia: The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe, Dr. Mario and Puzzle League, NP 2005 Holiday Buyer's Guide



NOVEMBER 2005, VOLUME 197
Out of the Shadows (Pokémon XD: Gale of Darkness), Fantastic Voyage (Fire Emblem: Path of Radiance), Inside Zelda, NP Top 200, The Bad Girls of Nemesis (Marvel Nemesis: Rise of the Imperfects), Army of One (Spartan: Total Warrior), Here Comes the Boom (Batallion Wars), Test Your Memory (Trace Memory), Dead of the Dawn (Castlevania: Dawn of Sorrow), True Crime: New York City, Call of Duty 2: Big Red One, Viewtiful Joe: Double Trouble, Tony Hawk's American Wasteland, Viewtiful Joe: Red Hot Rumble, The Chronicles of Narnia, Super Mario Strikers, Donkey Kong Country 3, The Sims 2

OCTOBER 2005, VOLUME 196
Into the Fire (Harry Potter and the Goblet of Fire), The Art of War (Spartan: Total Warrior), NP Top 200, Return of the King (King Kong), Inside Zelda, Land of the Lost (Lost in Blue), Trace Elements (Trace Memory), 2-D or Not 2-D, Hero Worship (Gunstar Super Heroes), Hulk's Bosses Need a Beating (The Incredible Hulk: Ultimate Destruction), War-Torn? (Advance Wars: Dual Strike), Build the Ultimate Weapon (Sigma Star Saga), SSX on Tour, Battalion Wars, Ultimate Spider-Man, Tak: The Great Juju Challenge, X-Men Legends II: Rise of Apocalypse, Phoenix Wright: Ace Attorney, New Puppy Magazine (Nintendogs)

SEPTEMBER 2005, VOLUME 195
Sega Goes Hog Wild (Shadow the Hedgehog, Sonic Rush, Sonic Gems Collection), Man's Best Friend (Nintendogs), The Agony and the XD (Pokémon XD: Gale of Darkness), Bros. of Summer (Mario Superstar Baseball), Help Wanted (Trauma Center), The Zelda Demo, Inside Zelda, Out of Bounds?, Madden NFL 06, Kirby: Canvas Curse, Smash Bros. Melee, Prince of Persia 3, Mario Tennis Advance, Metroid Prime Pinball, NBA Live 06, WWE: Day of Reckoning 2, Dance Dance Revolution: Mario Mix

AUGUST 2005, VOLUME 194
Mario Kart DS, I Love LA (E3 Wrap-Up), Built to Last, Nintendo World, Historical License, Make Your Move, Lunar: Dragon Song, Meteos, Age of Empires: The Age of Kings, DK: King of Swing, Zoo Tycoon, The Incredible Hulk: Ultimate Destruction, One Piece, Zatch Bell!, Pac 'n Roll, Madden NFL 06, Inside Zelda

OFFICIAL NINTENDO PLAYER'S GUIDES

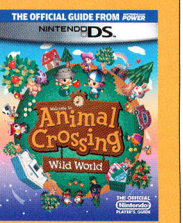
FIRE EMBLEM: PATH OF RADIANCE

POKÉMON XD: GALE OF DARKNESS

BATTALION WARS

MARIO & LUIGI: PARTNERS IN TIME

COMING SOON!



ANIMAL CROSSING: WILD WORLD

NINTENDO GAMECUBE

- STAR FOX: ASSAULT
- METROID PRIME 2 ECHOES
- PAPER MARIO: THE THOUSAND-YEAR DOOR
- PIKMIN 2
- POKÉMON COLOSSEUM
- THE LEGEND OF ZELDA: FOUR SWORDS ADVENTURES

GAME BOY ADVANCE AND NINTENDO DS

- ADVANCE WARS: DUAL STRIKE (DS)
- FIRE EMBLEM: THE SACRED STONES (GBA)
- POKÉMON EMERALD (GBA)
- THE LEGEND OF ZELDA: THE MINISH CAP (GBA)
- FINAL FANTASY I & II: DAWN OF SOULS(GBA)
- POKÉMON FIRERED & LEAFGREEN (GBA)
- METROID: ZERO MISSION (GBA)
- SWORD OF MANA (GBA)

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To contact the ESRB or for more information, visit www.esrb.org.
The Entertainment Software Rating Board evaluates each game's content and assigns one of the following ratings to reflect the appropriate age group for the game.

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Everyone (10+)

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Mature (17+)

Adult (18+)

Rating Pending

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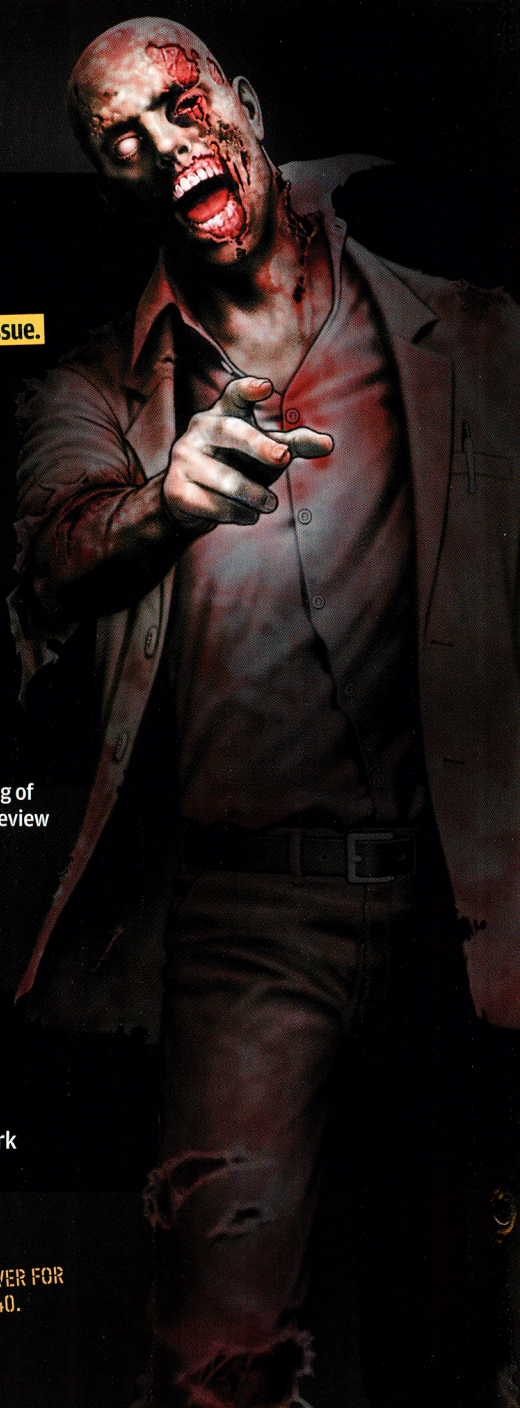
February 2006 Vol. 200

NEXT MONTH

Everyone is clamoring for Nintendo Power's 200th issue. Don't let this guy beat you to it.



ZOMBIES WITH ZIP

Resident Evil: Deadly Silence is approaching the Nintendo DS at surprising speed. If we can set it down, we'll bring you a first-play preview.

KING OF THE BOX OFFICE

As Peter Jackson's much-anticipated retelling of *King Kong* hits movie theatres, we'll offer a review and strategy for the film's GCN adaptation.

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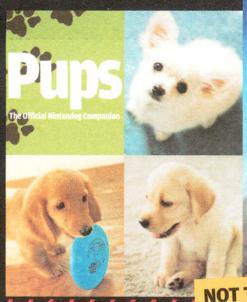

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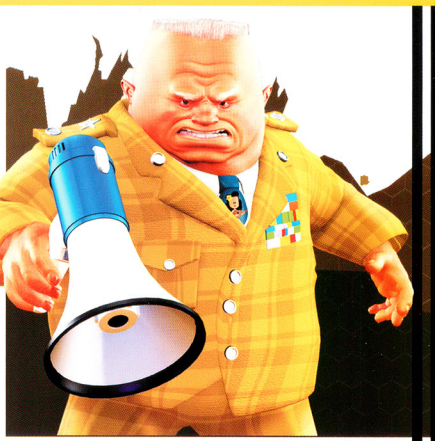

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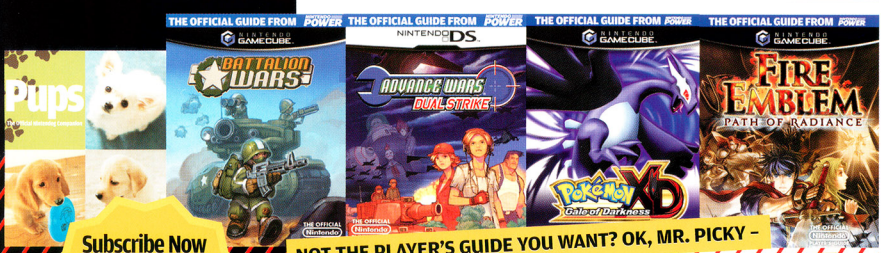

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